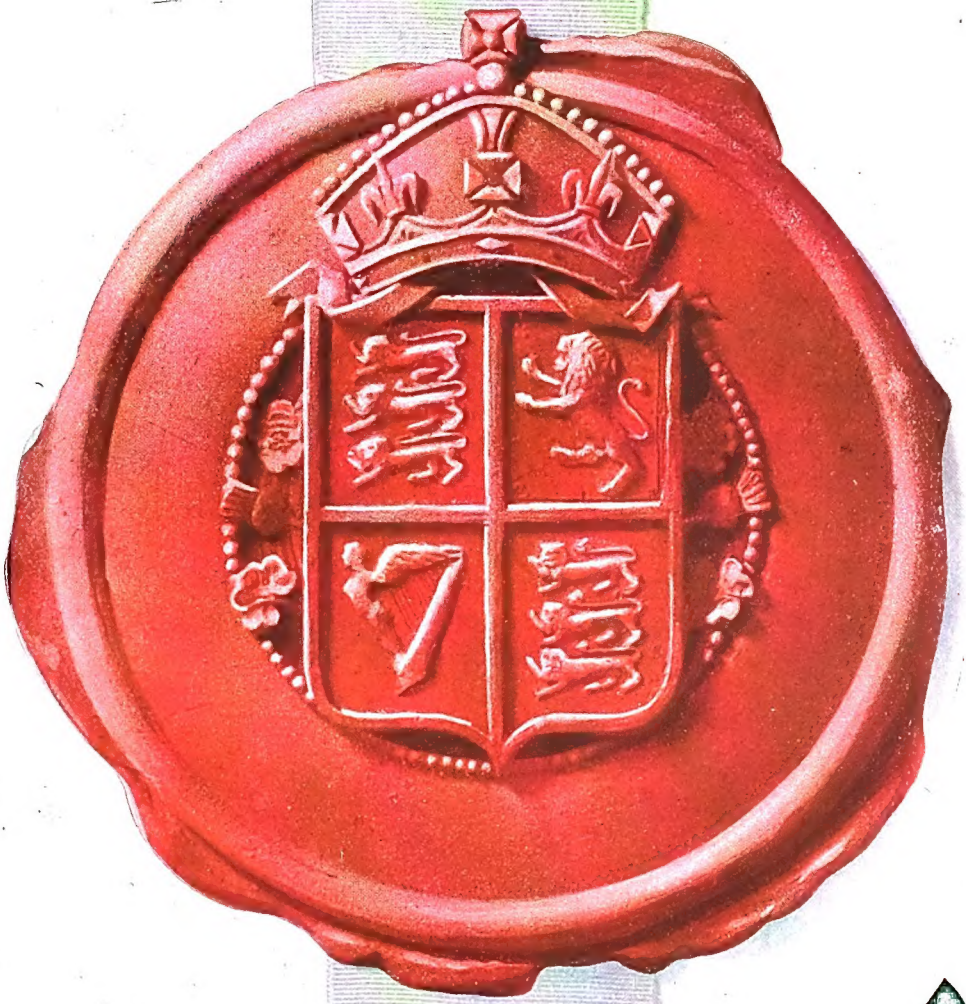
The January

ROYAL



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This type of inconstancy has suggested many a moral to poet and teacher. Let it point a personal lesson to-day. Ask yourself if the weather vane is in any way typical of the state of your Health. Is this really steady? Has painful experience made you fear that "well" to-day may mean "ill" to-morrow—that at any moment you are liable to a sense of prostration? To be frank you are not sure of yourself. That dreaded biliousness may attack you at any time; you fear to do this, or eat the other, less "that pain" should come on; low spirits, depression, hang about you like a cloud.

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THE LARK'S ALLOTMENT.

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Builds its nest on lowly earth.
If you the joy of happiness would know,
Must stoop to find its worth.

THE BREAKING OF LAWS, REBELLING AGAINST GREAT TRUTHS.

Discipline and Self-Denial, that Precious Boon, the Highest and Best in Life.

'Former generations perished in venial ignorance of all Sanitary Laws. When black death massacred hundreds of thousands neither the victims nor their rulers could be accounted responsible for their slaughter.'

—The Times.

THE MORAL:—

NATURE IS ONLY SUBDUED BY OBEDIENCE TO HER LAWS.

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HUGE BLUNDER.— *This age, in many points great and intelligent, spends large sums of money in legal strangling of those who cause their fellows violent death, the result of ignorance and a want of control over the passions, while we calmly allow millions to die of, and hundreds of millions to suffer from, various preventible diseases, simply for want of a proper Sanitary tribunal. The most ordinary observer must be struck with the huge blunder.*

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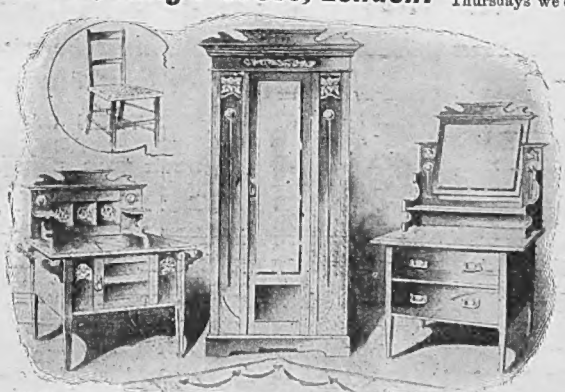

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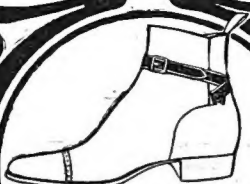

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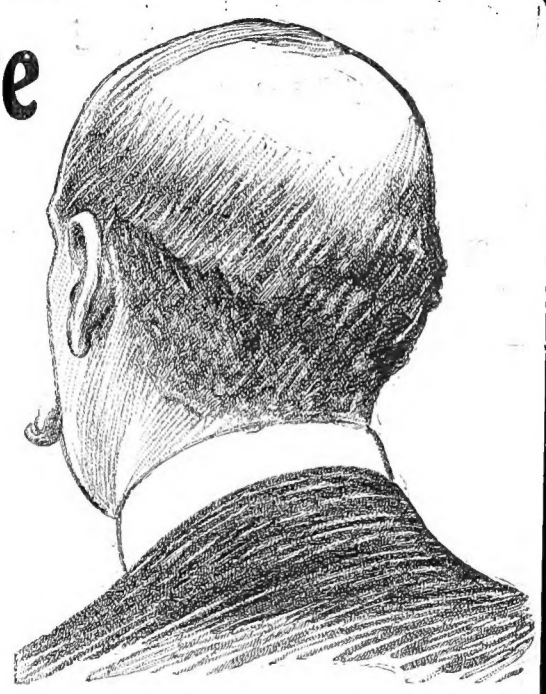

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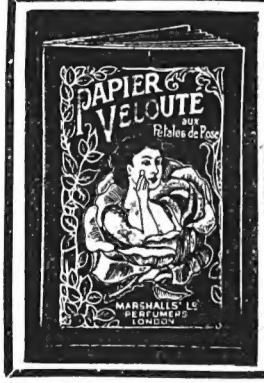

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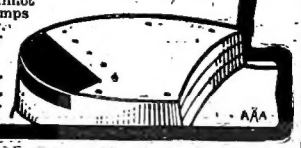

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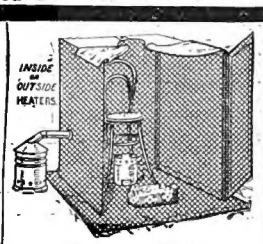

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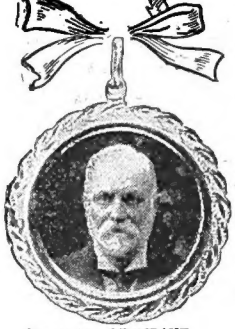

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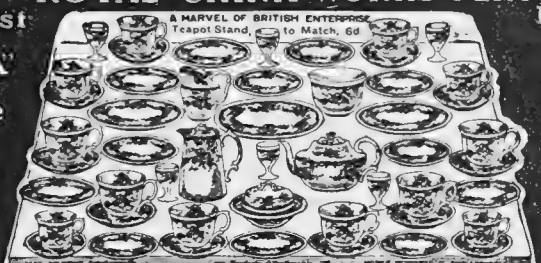

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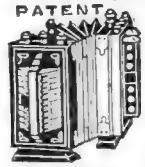

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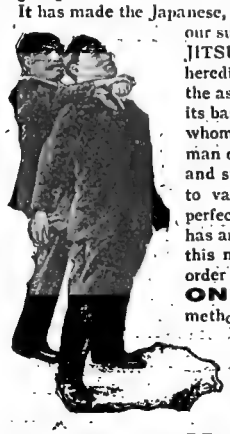

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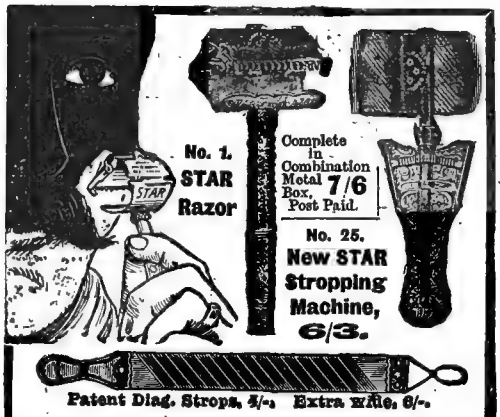

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Sold by all Silversmiths and Cutlers.

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If you would know how to defend yourself, unarmed, against every form of vicious attack and render helpless your assailant with an ease and rapidity which is astonishing—if you would possess that physical strength and power of endurance which characterises the Japanese soldier—you must learn JIU-JITSU.

JIU-JITSU is the best wonderful system of physical training and self-defence the world has ever known. Its practice develops every muscle, every tissue, and strengthens every organ of the human body. It makes men "strong as steel," and women the physical equal of men of their own age and weight. As a means of self-defence it is as potent at short range as the most deadly weapon. The JIU-JITSU includes a thorough knowledge of anatomy, and teaches how to produce temporary paralysis by a slight pressure exerted at one of the many vulnerable points. When once a person skilled in the art effects one of the JIU-JITSU "holds" it is utterly useless for an opponent to offer resistance. It makes no difference how unequally matched in point of size or strength the contestants may be, a knowledge of JIU-JITSU will enable a woman to overcome and render powerless the strongest man.

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For over 2,000 years the principles of JIU-JITSU have been religiously guarded. By an Imperial edict the teaching of the system was forbidden outside of Japan. The friendly feeling, however, existing between Japan and the English-speaking people has been instrumental in releasing JIU-JITSU from its oath-bound secrecy, and all the secrets of the Japanese National System of Physical Training and Self-Defence are now being revealed for the first time by the YABE SCHOOL OF JIU-JITSU, at Rochester, N.Y. Mr. Y. K. Yabe, formerly of the Ten-Shin Ryn School of Japan, has formulated a correspondence course which contains full instructions in Jiu-Jitsu. It is identical with the course taught in the leading school of Japan.

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An intensely interesting book, which explains the principles of Jiu-Jitsu, has just been written by Mr. Yabe. As long as the edition lasts this book, together with the first lesson in the art, will be sent free to interested persons. The lesson is fully illustrated with full-page half tone engravings, and shows one of the most effective methods known to Jiu-Jitsu for disposing of a dangerous antagonist. If you desire to know more about the closely-guarded secrets of this marvellous science, you should write to-day for this free book and specimen lesson. They will be sent you by return mail, post-paid. Address, using a penny postcard or 2½d. stamp,

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THROUGH THE FEET
By New External Remedy which is Guaranteed to Cure.
Send Name and Address To-day and Get
4/6 WORTH FREE

We want every rheumatic sufferer to send us his or her name and address and receive by return post 4/6 worth of the new and marvellous remedy—MAGIC FOOT DRAFTS free of charge.

These Drafts are guaranteed to cure Rheumatism in all parts of the body, no matter of how long standing. They are worn on the soles of the feet right over the great sweat pores, and cure by drawing the poisonous acid, which causes the pain, right out of the system.

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Read what one of our hundreds of cured patients says:—

The Manse, Granby Street, Loughborough.

Gentlemen,—Your Foot Drafts arrived and I can safely say they have practically cured me. Should I at any future time have any returning symptoms I shall at once resort to your splendid remedy.—Yours very sincerely,

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Mr. H., writing some months later, says that he has not had any return of the rheumatism and that the cure is permanent.

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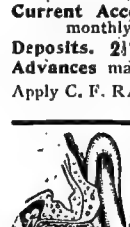

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Represents a Musical-box playing Six Popular Airs, and introducing the Chimes, Bugle Calls, Cuckoo, etc. A great novelty; copyright. Post free 1/7 (per postal order). W. DOUGLAS (A.B.), 17 Houghton Street, Liverpool.

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It is now within reach of Every Woman to Save the Drunkard—A Free Trial Package of a Marvellous Home Remedy Posted to all who write for it.

Can be given in Tea, Coffee, or Food, thus absolutely and secretly Curing the Patient in a Short Time without his knowledge.

There is a cure for drunkenness which has shed a radiance into thousands of hitherto desolate firesides. It does the work so silently and surely that while the devoted wife, sister, or daughter looks on the drunkard is reclaimed even against his will and without his knowledge or co-operation. The Company who have this grand remedy will send a sample free to all who will write for it. Enough of this remedy is posted in this way to show how it is used in tea, coffee, or food, and that it will cure the dreaded habit quietly and permanently.

A lady residing in Manchester used the remedy as described above, and her experience, told in her own words, will quite likely interest all women deeply. Mrs. —— says: "Yes, I used Antidipso without my husband's knowledge, and completely cured him. He was a hard drinker, a good man when sober, but for years I lived in fear and dread, shame and despair, poverty and disgrace. How shall I tell other women about it? Is it not a wonderful thing that a woman can take matters in her own hands and stamp out this dreadful curse to the home? I am glad you are going to publish my experience, for then I know it will reach hundreds of other poor souls, and they will cure their husbands just as I cured mine. I am so grateful for the marvellous changes that have come into my life that I just feel I would do anything to let every wife and mother know what a blessing Antidipso is. I honestly believe it will cure any drunkard, no matter how far down he may have fallen. Faithfully yours, MRS. ——."

(Full address sent to *bonâ fide* applicants.)

Hundreds of others are reported, even the worst cases where the habit seems to have blotted out the last remaining spark of self-respect. Tears and prayers are of no use. Pleading, pledges, loss of social or business position are unavailing to stem the tide of absolute depravity.

This famous remedy has re-united thousands of scattered families; it has saved thousands of men to social and business prominence and public respect; has guided many a young man into the right road to fortune; has saved the father, the brother, the son, and in many cases, the wife and daughter too. Such a godsend to the home should be known to everyone.

Upon application to the WARD CHEMICAL COMPANY, 164 CENTURY HOUSE, 205 REGENT STREET, LONDON, W., they will post a free package of the remedy to you, securely sealed in a plain wrapper, also full directions how to use it, books, testimonials from hundreds who have been cured, and everything needed to aid you in saving those near and dear to you from a life of degradation and ultimate poverty and disgrace. Send for a free trial to-day. It will brighten the rest of your life.

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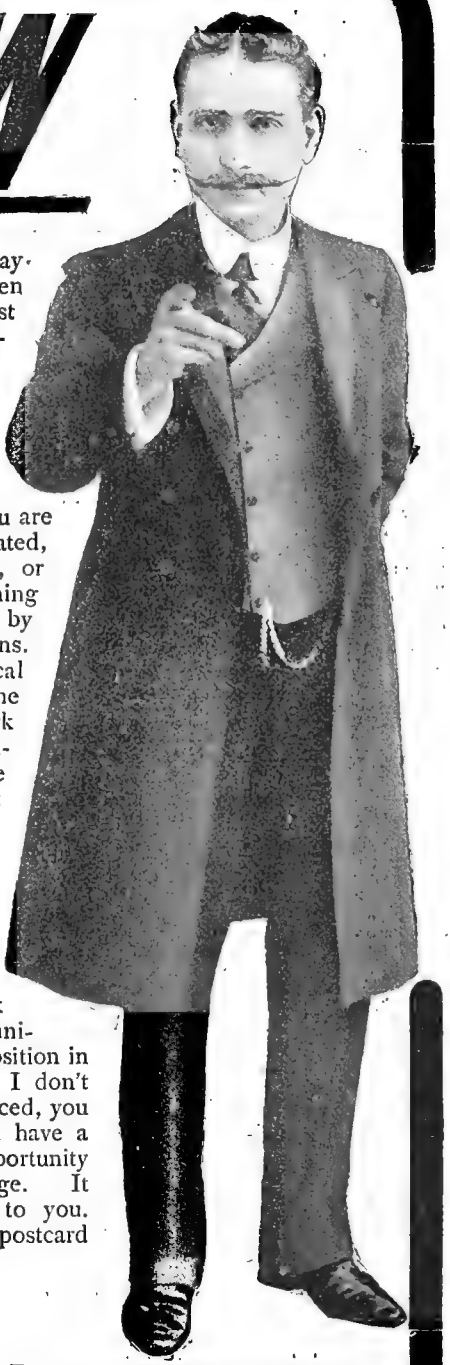

what I am talking about, and what I have been saying to you many times over in this Magazine, when I tell you I can show you the way to earn at least double your present salary, and ensure for yourself a first-class position with first-class pay. If I did not carry out what I state, how is it that our work is increasing all over the world? How is it that to-day we are recommended by the best-known men, and our system endorsed all over the world? This proves what I say to you is correct. I don't care what position you are holding to-day, where you have been educated, whether you are a labourer, office boy, clerk, or manager, I can put you on the way to something better. Thousands of people have been lifted by us from poor positions to high-salaried positions. How? By entering the profession of Electrical Engineering. I know, and you know, that the ordinary trades are overcrowded, men are in work to-day, out of work to-morrow. The "unemployed" question is staring them in the face all the time. I want you to be in a different position. I want to qualify you, by post, direct to your home, in your spare time, and at little cost to yourself, to become an Electrical Engineer. This profession is not overcrowded, and it ensures you good pay and permanent work. I know I can do this for you if you will send me your name and address, so that I can send you *Free* our Book called "How to become an Electrical or Mechanical Engineer." I want you to read my proposition in that book, and consider things for yourself. I don't want you to take my word for it. I am prejudiced, you know; but I am not so without a reason. I have a reason when I say to you: "Don't miss the opportunity of looking into my statements, free of charge. It might mean all the difference in the world to you. Write me your name and address to-day. A postcard will do.

Secretary,

ELECTRICAL ENGINEER INSTITUTE OF CORRESPONDENCE INSTRUCTION,

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Thousands Owe Their Lives to the Skill of This Wonderful Doctor.

Seems to Possess Strange and Mysterious Power Over Disease.

Offers His Services Free To The Sick and Afflicted, Distance No Barrier.

For the past three years accounts have come from America of the most astonishing nature regarding marvellous cures that were being performed daily by the famous physician and scientist, Dr. James W. Kidd.

At first these stories were received with considerable doubt, but there continued to come reports of men and women being restored to health after years of suffering. Chronic and so-called incurable invalids were brought back to perfect health. There seemed no affliction or disease but what he might cure. Thousands of patients were treated by the doctor until his name and the fame of his marvellous remedies spread all over the civilised world. Investigation has proved every assertion made by Dr. Kidd. Some of the stories told and letters received from grateful patients seem to indicate that this man's remedies possess a mysterious power over disease. No matter how severe the case, how chronic, of how long standing, what other men have said or failed to do. These are the cases he especially solicits, because they give him a chance to prove his superior ability. When asked the secret of his success, the doctor modestly answers that it is partly due to the wonderful remedies which he uses, and partly to the careful attention given each case. He treats patients all over the civilised world by mail, and seems equally as successful as though they were present in his office. His greatest ambition is to give every sick, afflicted, and suffering man and woman in the world a chance to try his wonderful treatment.

In an interview recently the doctor said, "I believe that I have discovered a way to relieve most of the suffering from sickness and disease in the world, and I believe that it is my duty as far as possible to make this fact known to all. For this reason I am offering to send a free treatment to every applicant, rich or poor, no matter where they live, no matter what their disease. I am not a rich man, and cannot afford to always give my medicines away, but I am going to continue as long as possible or until every afflicted person has had a chance to try and satisfy themselves without expending one penny." Do you mean that you will send treatment absolutely free to every one who applies? was asked. "That is exactly what I mean. Any sick or afflicted person who will write to me and describe their condition may have a trial of this treatment entirely free. There are no conditions, no restriction. Distance is no barrier. I cure as readily thousands of miles away as in my office. A letter does just as well as a personal visit."

The above statement appeared in all the leading American papers and from there to the English Press. As a result Dr. Kidd's mail has been flooded with applications for free treatment. All have been answered promptly, but still they continue to come. For the benefit of his thousands of patients in the British Empire, the doctor has been compelled to establish an office in London. To secure a free treatment, it is only necessary to address Dr. James W. Kidd, 430 Saracens Buildings, Snow Hill, London, E.C., being sure to describe your case. Remember that the doctor treats all diseases, from the simplest and easiest cured to the so-called incurable and chronic afflictions. There is no disease that he may not cure. In view of Dr. Kidd's marvellous success, his standing among America's most famous physicians, his reputation for honesty and integrity, this offer affords a remarkable opportunity to all who are sick and in need of medical help. It means a chance to get well. It means the opinion and advice of one of the world's most famous and successful physicians on your case absolutely free.

GOLD MEDAL AWARDED, Woman's Exhibition, London, 1900.

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Extra Quality, **5d.**

OF ALL DEALERS

Wholesale only: Veritas Lamp Works, Farringdon Road, London, E.C.

Veritas Mantles don't get out of shape because they are made of Ramie, a tough vegetable fibre many times stronger than cotton. Veritas Mantles burn for months with undimmed brilliancy, and give 30% more light than any other mantle.

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MAKES WOMEN BEAUTIFUL.

Marvellous Development accomplished by the new and wonderful Diano method of enlarging the female bust.

Thin women are quickly developed into commanding figures that excite wonderment and admiration.

A new and surprisingly effective home treatment has been discovered that enlarges the female bust at least six inches. Women who are not lacking in this respect will not be particularly interested, but those who by some unfortunate circumstances of health or occupation are deficient in this development will be very much fascinated by the peculiar prominence achieved by the treatment. It is called DIANO, and is controlled by the well-known ESPANOLA MEDICINE COMPANY. There is no doubt about the marvellous power of this new treatment to develop the bust to a gratifying extent. Any lady who wishes to know more about DIANO should send her name and address to the ESPANOLA MEDICINE COMPANY. They will send free in plain sealed envelope by post a new "beauty book" they have just prepared, also photographs from life, showing the actual development induced, and a great number of testimonials from physicians, chemists, and prominent ladies, all commending the wonderful and remarkable power of DIANO to enlarge the bust, no matter how flat the chest may be. Do not fail to write at once. The beauty book and portraits will delight you. All you need to do is to send name and address and a stamp to pay postage. All correspondence strictly confidential. Address—

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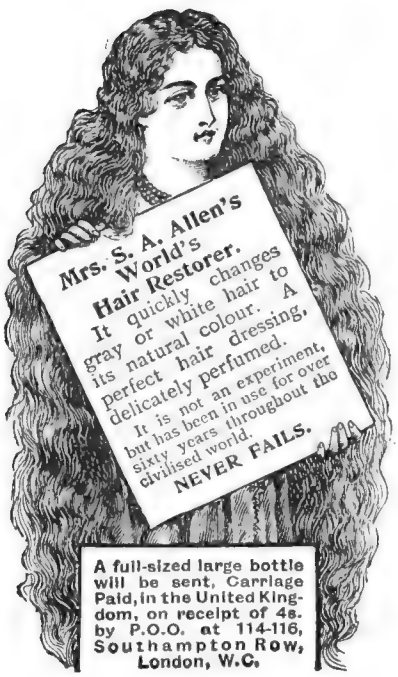

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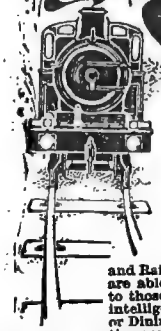

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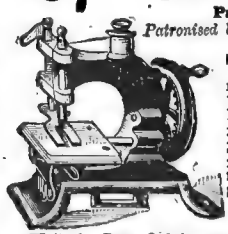

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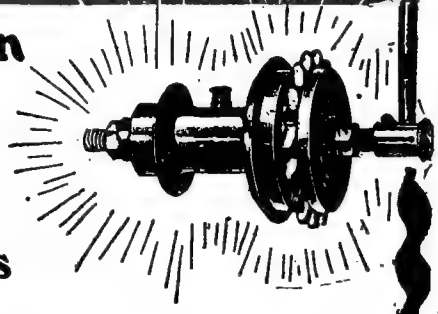

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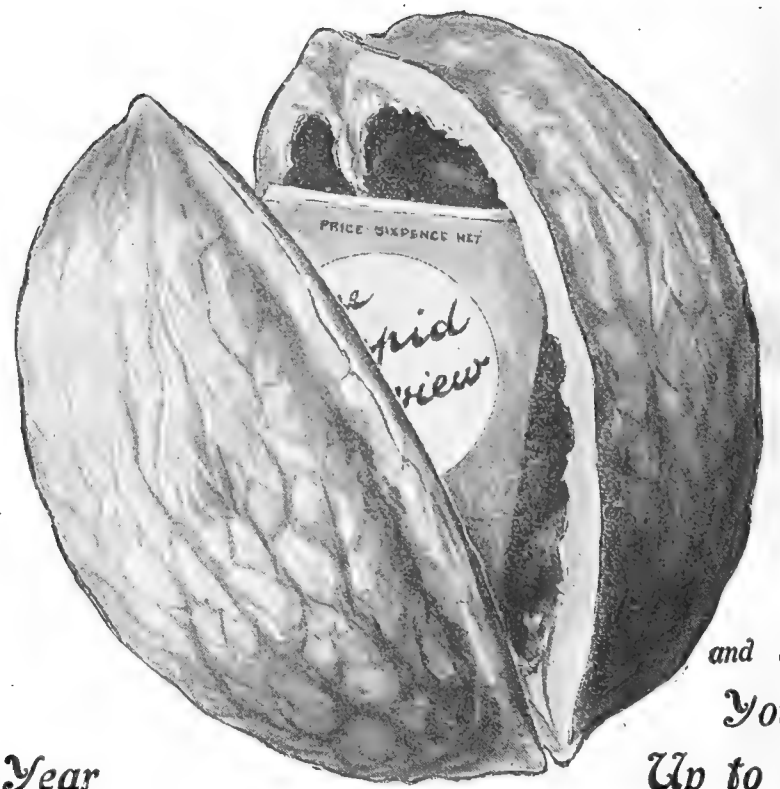

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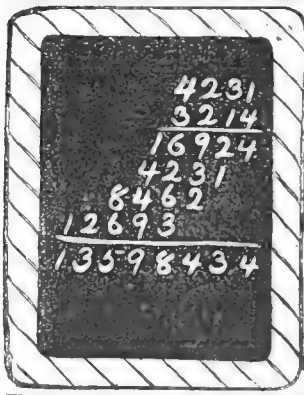

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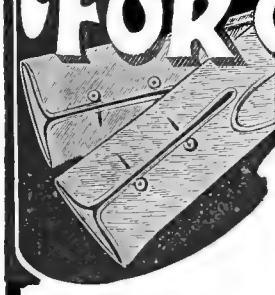

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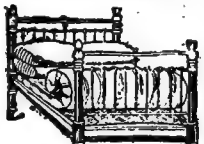

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THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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The Editor will always be ready to consider contributions, whether literary or pictorial, and where stamps are inclosed will make every endeavour to insure their safe return in the event of their proving unsuitable, although he cannot hold himself responsible for any MSS. or drawings or photographs sent on approval.

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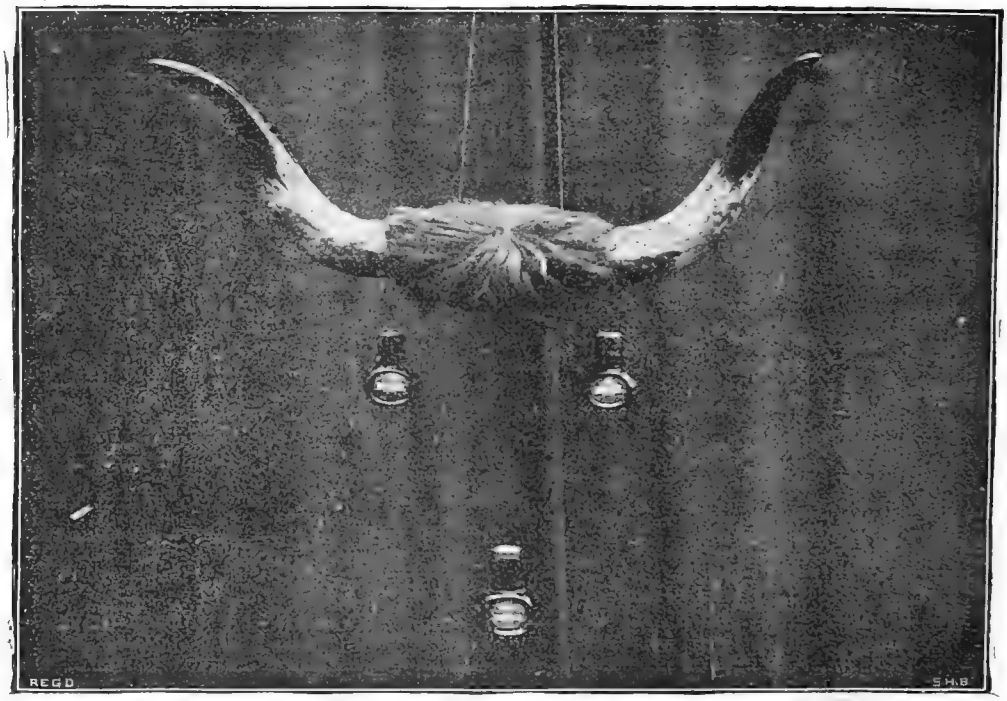

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Health. Strength. Energy.

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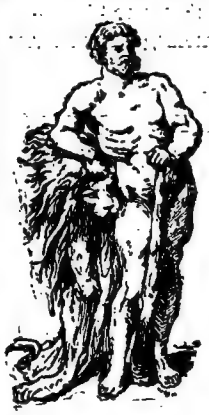

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AND NO OTHER

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"MATCHLESS" METAL POLISH

Is BRITISH ALL THROUGH.

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An English Beauty.

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"MUMMY, DEAR!"

SONGS AND THEIR SINGERS

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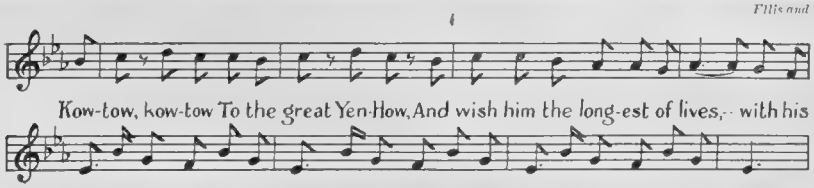
Kow-tow, kow-tow To the great Yen-How, And wish him the long-est of lives,- with his
one lit-tle, two lit-tle, three lit-tle, four lit-tle, five lit-tle, six lit-tle wives!

RUTLAND BARRINGTON.

♡♡♡

Rutland Barrington may be depended upon to sing a capital song with a jolly tune in all the pieces he plays in. "The Six Little Wives" in San Toy was amusing, and caught on at once. Rutland Barrington writes many of the verses of his songs, and has been responsible for more than one play. When he was a little boy he was left at home one Sunday, and told to turn into verse a passage from a pious book. Little is known of this early effort, save the refrain, which ran: "Fol the rol lido doodle um day."

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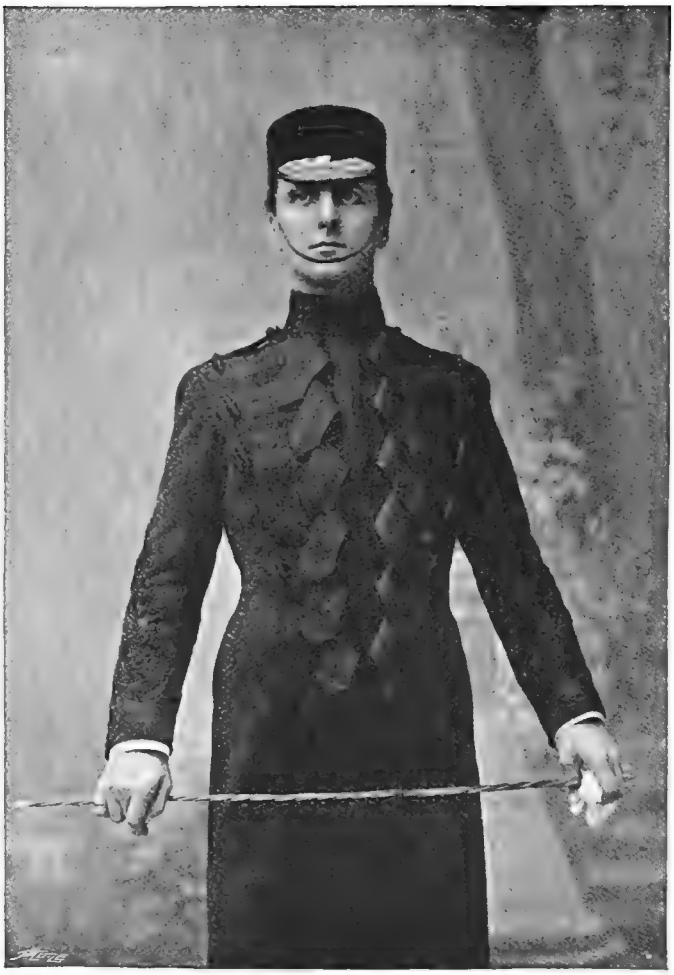

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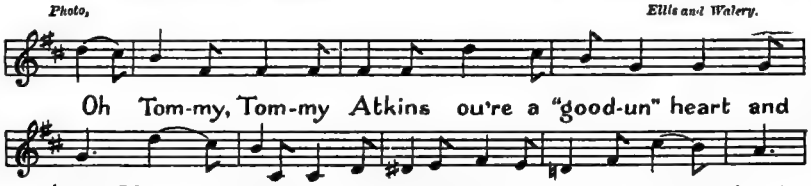

HAYDEN COFFIN.

♡♡♡

A soldier's uniform is a capital thing to show off a man's figure and face, and Hayden Coffin looks his best in uniform. He vies with Lewis Waller for the position of first favourite with matinée maidens, and, we should say, the competition must be pretty keen, for though Lewis Waller has the splendid, dashing cavalier manner, Hayden Coffin has the voice. Still, there is room for them both, and many more.

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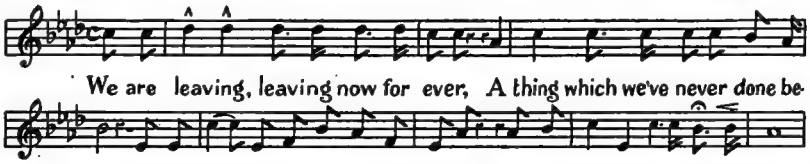
We are leaving, leaving now for ever, A thing which we've never done be-
fore; If you see the mother tell her gently, She will find her baby on the shore

GEORGE GROSSMITH.

♡♡♡

The baby was being brought round for inspection in the drawing-room. It behaved beautifully until it came to George Grossmith, then it suddenly yelled, and was carried away howling by its nurse, who was heard to make some remarks about "a horrid, ugly man, then, didums." George Grossmith must have felt the shame keenly, and it is evidently reflected in "The Baby on the Shore," the most pathetic of pathetic, farcical ballads.

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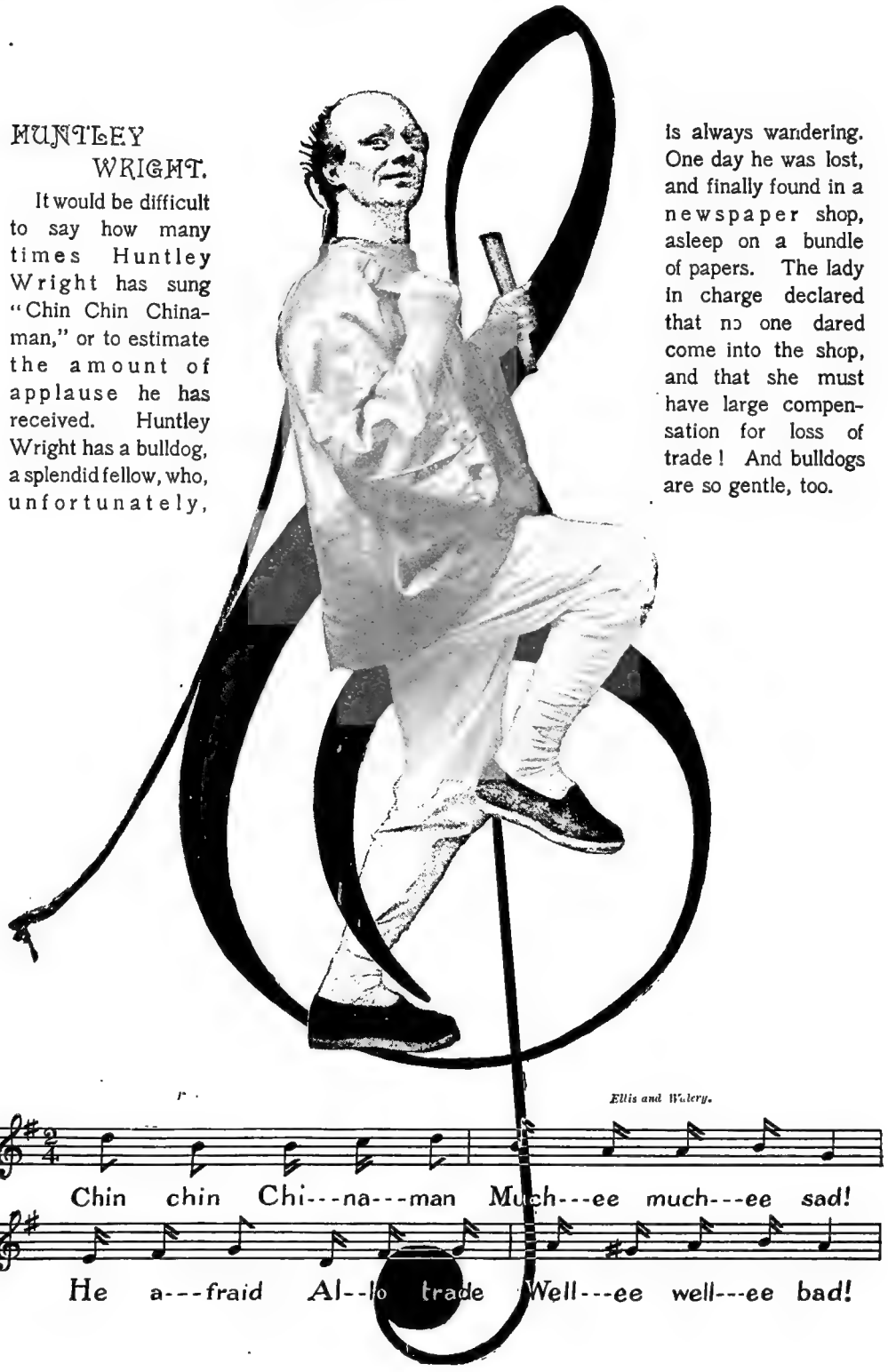
HUNTLEY WRIGHT.

It would be difficult to say how many times Huntley Wright has sung "Chin Chin Chinaman," or to estimate the amount of applause he has received. Huntley Wright has a bulldog, a splendid fellow, who, unfortunately, is always wandering. One day he was lost, and finally found in a newspaper shop, asleep on a bundle of papers. The lady in charge declared that no one dared come into the shop, and that she must have large compensation for loss of trade! And bulldogs are so gentle, too.



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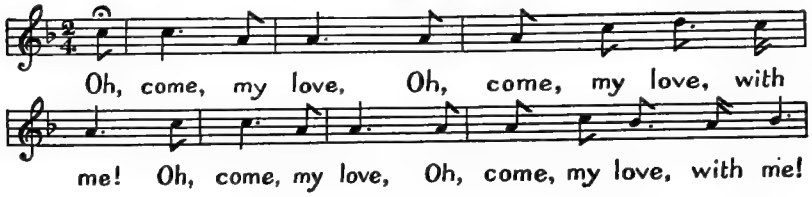
MAY YOHE.

♡♡♡

Some time ago May Yohe declared that she would never act in petticoats again, but always play boys' parts. She certainly looks bewitching as a boy. Miss Yohe was rehearsing a play by George R. Sims once, and had to speak a line she could not quite understand. "Say, Sims, what's that?" "A joke," said Mr. Sims. "Oh," was the doubtful answer. "Say, Sims, will you make a map of all the jokes in this piece, anyway?" Everybody remembers how her song "Oh, come, my love," took the town by storm.

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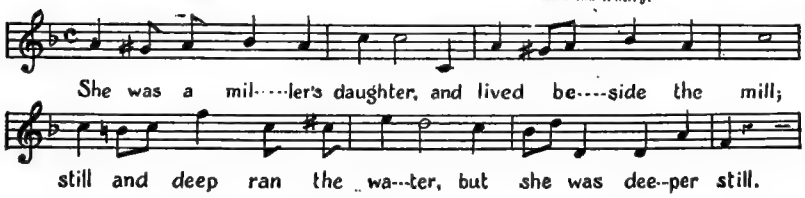

HILDA MOODY.

♡♡♡

A musical young lady, from a family of musicians. Hilda Moody used to sing to herself, when a little girl, for hours together, long selections of Italian operas. Her song, "The Miller's Daughter," was an enormous success. One night, at the end of the song, a huge bouquet was given to her in the shape of a mill, sails and all, entirely made of flowers.

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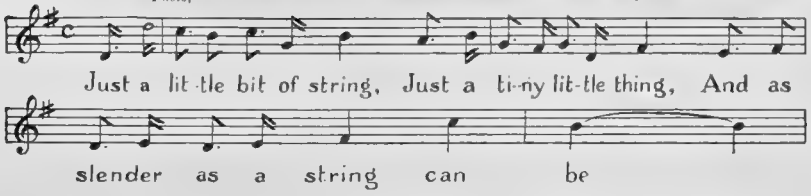

ELLALINE TERRISS.

♡ ♡ ♡

Ellaline Terriss's songs are always the great attraction of the plays in which she acts. "Just a Little Bit of String" is delightful. She sang it in the Circus Girl at the Gaiety, and it soon became well known everywhere. Ellaline Terriss is, as everybody knows, Mrs. Seymour Hicks. She is devoted to horses and dogs.

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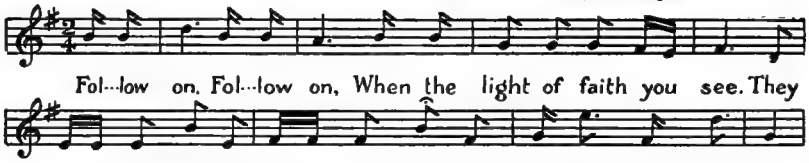
EDNA MAY.

♡♡♡

There are three kinds of triumphs that all girls love—social, theatrical, and triumphs of the heart. Edna May scored a splendid social one once. The Horse Show at New York was crowded with the prettiest of pretty ladies in the chic-est of chic toilettes. Suddenly a vision appeared. It was Edna May in ermine—ermine in her hat, ermine on her dress, ermine muff—everything ermine, dazzling white ermine. All eyes were turned to her, and all New York talked of her for days afterwards.

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The Confessions of Cupid

I.—THROUGH A WINDOW.

The First of a Series in which the Famous Little Matchmaker Tells of some of his Doings.

By Gertie de S. Wentworth-James.

Directly I saw that the little, tight, hard look (which had hitherto played only very intermittently round the corners of Vallie Prynce's baby-curved mouth) was becoming almost perpetual, I knew it was time for me to interfere.

There were also other signs which made me realise that I was the only person who could put matters right.

When a girl who is dainty, delicious, and designed for loving, begins to do her hair without looking in the glass, leaves off making her dressmaker's existence a serialised sorrow, and ceases to hear her own passionate heart-beats in the throb of a waltz-measure played by strings, it is desperately necessary that Cupid should exert himself before it is too late.

And it *can* be too late, alas! even when youth is young—that is if Ambition, Fame, and Success, or Strife and Failure, have got the reins too tightly in hand.

Success can fill a woman's heart till there is no room for me, just as Failure can so empty it that the doors close to with a heavy hollow sound—never to re-open!

Success and Failure are my two most formidable rivals!

Well, in the case of Vallie Prynce, it was with the former that I had to cope.

She was gradually, insidiously, becoming famous, and often, as I tried to make my way to her side while she stood busily at work in her studio, a high wall of commissioned pictures seemed to bar my progress; and one day (I was hovering, shivering, unseen, and unwelcome, by the doorway) I overheard her answer a blue-eyed, glad-faced girl who was twisting a new pearl ring on her finger.

Then I knew that one of my hardest tasks lay before me, and that I must begin work at once.

"Oh! Vallie, dear, I want—*so* much I want it—to see you just only happy as I am happy! And nothing but love can do it—*nothing but love!*" said the dear little blue-eyed girl.

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Then Vallie turned round with a *little* real, and a great deal of imitation, scorn in her eyes.

"*Nothing but love!*" she cried, turning round, palette and brush in hand, her beautiful brown eyes blazing and almost black (how I longed to soften that brilliancy as only *I* can do!). "Nothing but love when there is ambition—ambition that may lead to fame! . . . What is love? Something that takes up time and hinders Art — something unsatisfactory, illusionary, that leaves no golden trail of Fame behind it! Forgive my saying it, Millie, dearest, but lately I have more and more begun to regard love as a *myth*, a—a—nothing—that—matters!"

Oh! how I longed for a *visible* personality that I might actively avenge these slights! I — a *myth!* I — a "nothing — that—matters!" I, who, though only a plump little curled and winged boy, carry more real things in my quiver full of bitter-sweet-tipped arrows than ever Ambition gave away in her breath of vanishing thistledown fluff!

Vallie Prynce must learn my greatness, and, if needs be, as others have learned before—*in a lesson of tears!*

I at once began to inspect with my mind's eye the ranks of those who would be likely to help me in bringing about the what-had-to-be.

The bank manager with the watch chain? No, no, too much curvature beneath the watch chain.

The velvet-coated R.A.? The manicured officer? The healthy chartered accountant? The Spanish 'cellist? The ——

Ah! of course, the very man!

Oscar Deveson — the cold-eyed, sleek-headed, strong-profiled, private-incomed occupant of the flat below!

I had just realised that my man was found when the door—which had only five minutes previously closed behind the blue-eyed little girl—opened to admit the one who was to be my ally.

With a light friendly nod, Vallie turned round and greeted him—such an unpromisingly "chummy" nod from my point of view!—which he returned with an expression on his face that I could not entirely understand.

"How's it going?" he asked, alluding to her half-finished *magnum opus* by a pronoun that gave evidence of entire intimacy.

"Oh! *stiff,*" she answered discontentedly, squeezing the colour out of a tube, "I can't get a model to pose as I want, and the lay-figure is the most incomplete contrivance ever left unfinished. Until they put spurious life into lay-figures they will remain uninspiring. A thing must be able to move, in order to keep still gracefully. Oh! no, that isn't a hint! You may sit down!

With these last words she half-turned, smiling at him over her shoulder, and as he returned the smile I noticed that he was looking steadily into her eyes.

My moment had arrived as far as he was concerned—very little would be required to teach him my beautiful lesson.

Silently I flew forward, and standing on a pedestal just behind his shoulder, whispered in his ear.

"Look at her neck—isn't it soft and white and young, rising like a lily-flower above the cut-away collar of her gown? Doesn't she make a sweeter picture than *she* could ever create, standing right there in the sunlight, her blue painting pinafore flowing about her like the gown of a goddess, her wonderful, electric hair almost brightened to gold, her glorious brown eyes full of mysteries, and her red, red lips parted and smiling? Ah! Oscar, what lips for kissing! Think of the rapture in cutting out her art and her fame-dreams! Think of taking all that sweetness to your heart and crying 'she is mine—all, all mine.' Oh! think of it!"

He moved a step nearer and his breath came quickly.

"Swish!" I flew back and took aim.

"Ping" went my bitter-sweet-tipped arrow and then—and then—well, I knew at once by the light in his eyes that the aim had been accurate and effectual!

My victim was in love!

Like every nice man, Oscar Deveson became silent with misgiving directly he understood the new strong beating of his heart.

For half-an-hour longer they chattered—the man hesitatingly and half-timorously, the girl easily, brightly, and with daunting friendliness.

At last he rose to go.

"Er—may I come again soon?" he said, holding her firm, strong little hand in his for just a space longer than demanded by the conventional *adieu*.

Vallie laughed with unconscious amusement, and showed her pretty white teeth as she returned his tender hand-pressure with a hearty clasp of good-fellowship.

"Why this sudden ceremony? Of *course* you can come again, as usual; just as soon as you like! You funny man! Good-bye. Don't forget about the brushes, will you? All thanks. 'Goo'-bye'!"

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As Oscar passed me in leaving, I felt quite touched by the wistful look on his face, as with a sigh he closed the studio door behind him.

Then began my tussle.

"He loves you," I whispered. "He is good, brave, honourable, and a gentleman; and he loves you!" (She started ever so slightly.) "You are young *now* and luck looks your way, but you are only one among hundreds of women artists and can never be first with the world. You *can* be first with him." (She mixed her paints slowly and mechanically.) "Why not *be* first? Ambition, fame, and success are only substitutes at best, as every loveless woman knows when the grey curtains close and shut out youth's daring flaring pictures." (She laid down her palette and looked dreamily out into the sunlight.) "Think of a home shared by you and one loved man! Companionship, confidence, tenderness, and passion. Think of his lips murmuring 'my wife!' O! lay down the hope of laurel leaves and reach out for white orange blossoms. They are best! They are best!"

I paused.

Ah! it has been useless—all useless!

With a light laugh Vallie left sunlight dreams, and picking up her palette and brushes re-commenced patterning an Oriental brass screen with marvellous delicacy and skill.

I was worsted! She had *laughed* at my whispered words!

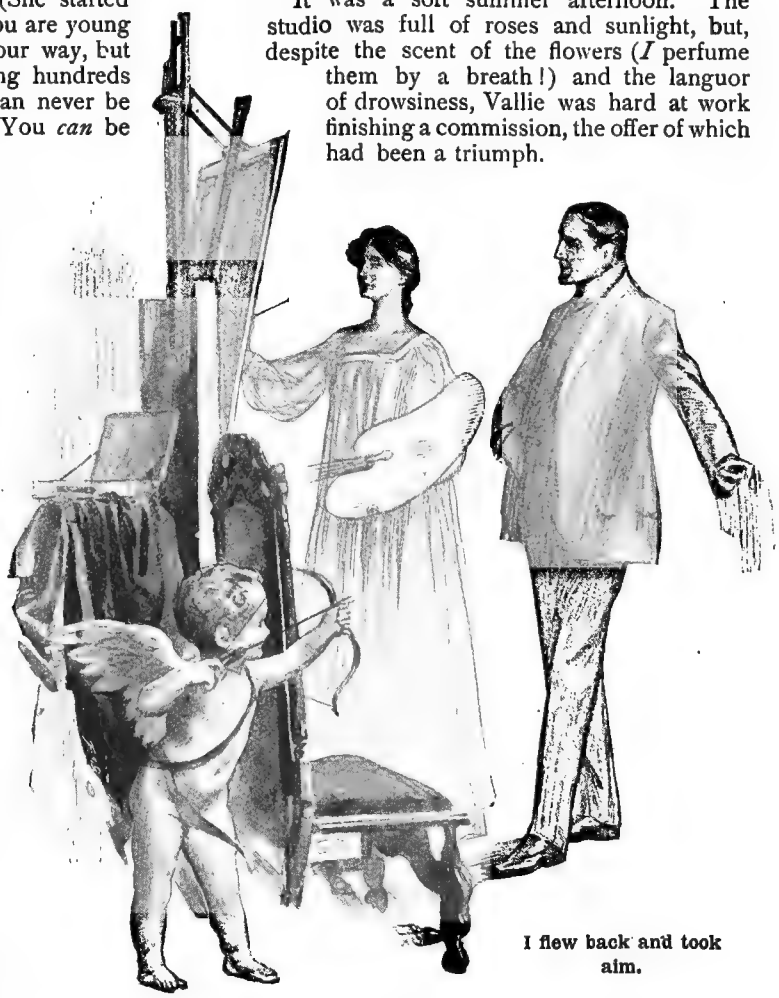
Passionately, I took aim, again and again, but each time my bitter-sweet-tipped darts touched her soft flesh, and then bounded lightly off without even grazing or scratching the warm smooth skin!

Day after day, week after week, it was the same.

Oh! the whispered words and arrows I wasted!

However, at last a green-eyed ally came to my aid, and between us we achieved what I could never have managed alone.

It was a soft summer afternoon. The studio was full of roses and sunlight, but, despite the scent of the flowers (*I* perfume them by a breath!) and the languor of drowsiness, Vallie was hard at work finishing a commission, the offer of which had been a triumph.



I flew back and took aim.

Suddenly the door opened and her maid (a good elderly creature of the "bless-'er-little-'eart" type) entered the studio.

"Oh! Miss Vallie," she panted excitedly. "Such goings on! Lor'! I'd 'ave never believed it, despite being a widow and knowing men's wicked ways. You know 'ow you can see into that little study what Mr. Deveson's built out, by looking out of the bathroom window? Well, I 'appened to be glancing down jest now, taking in a bit of fresh air, so to

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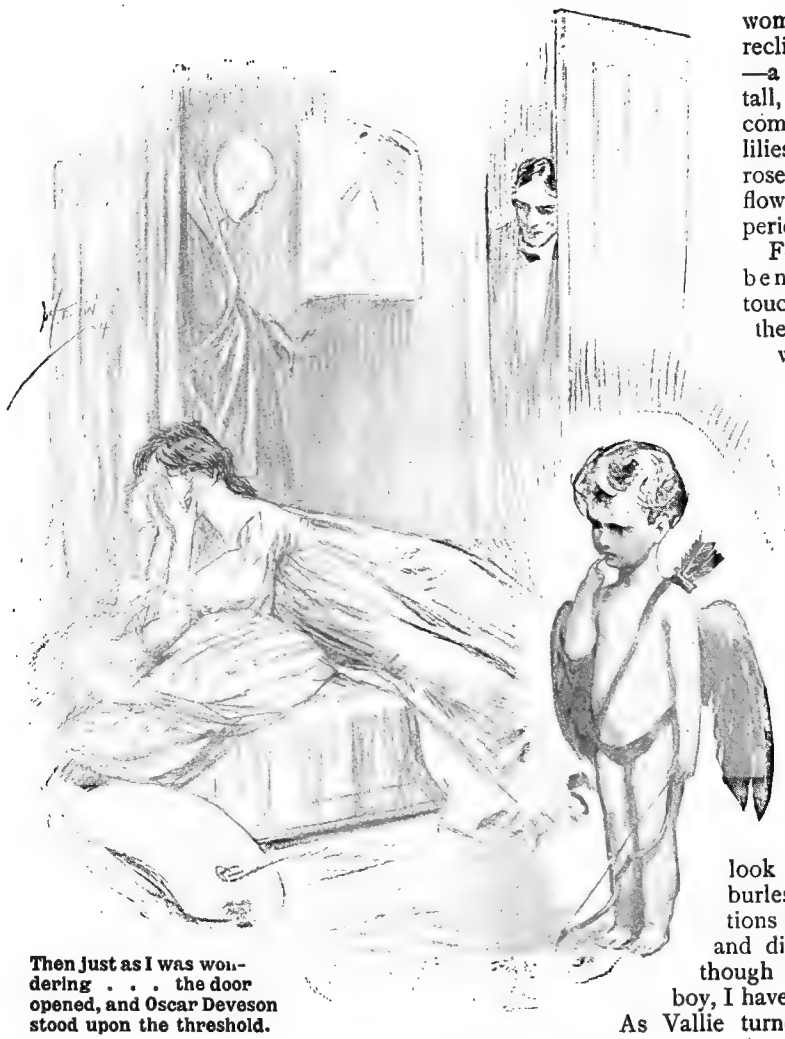

Then just as I was wondering . . . the door opened, and Oscar Deveson stood upon the threshold.

speak, and I saw—well, come and look for yourself, miss."

Laying down her "tools," Vallie ran lightly and laughingly into the bathroom.

Of course, it was some joke, and Oscar *meant* her to see, like when he painted a caricature of her Academy picture and fastened it on the sill.

"Now look, miss, look! Did you hever!"

And Vallie looked—looked till her face seemed suddenly less young—and I, who was peeping over her shoulder, felt that I must have been making some ghastly mistake about the occupant of the flat below.

He possessed no feminine relatives of any description, and yet—and yet——

Oh! who *could* she be?

Down in Oscar Deveson's study was a woman, half-lying, half-reclining on the lounge—a beautiful woman, tall, gold-haired, with a complexion whiter than lilies and pinker than roses, clad in loose flowing sea-green draperies.

For a moment Oscar bent over her and touched her yellow curls, then, stepping backward, he stood still waiting for an answering caress. And the waiting (*ugh!* the minx!) was not long! Slowly the gold-haired syren rose from her indecorously easy attitude, stretched out two exquisitely moulded white arms, and with a graceful, gliding movement, advanced towards——

Ugh! I couldn't look any more — any burlesquing of the emotions that I create revolts and disgusts me, because, though I am only a little boy, I have the soul of a man!

As Vallie turned away, *I* turned away.

"*That's* a picture for you, isn't it, miss? So I s'pose Mr. Deveson's gone and got married *sub-rose-water*, so to speak! Dearie me! Now, I shou'd say ——"

But Vallie and I didn't wait to hear what Parkins "would say"—we hurried back to the studio where the sunlight seemed cold and the roses scentless.

Quite still, she stood, quite, *quite* still; her lips moved, her hand clutched one fold of the blue painting pinafore.

Now, if ever, was my time.

The lesson must be learnt, even though taught by tears!"

"*Ping!*"

It was done! *It was done!!*

The bitter-sweet-tipped arrow had pierced her white young arm, and one tiny drop of

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blood, unseen save by me, fell upon the blue painting apron.

She loved—and more than that, she *knew* she loved, now that it seemed too late.

With a desperate little cry she threw herself on to a low cushioned divan, and shed those tears that a girl must shed before she becomes a woman.

Then, just as I was wondering if I should have done better to have left those cold Fame-dreams alone, the door opened, and Oscar Deveson stood upon the threshold.

Up to that moment he had waited for some sign (not daring, because of his great humble love, to take the lead), but now, now that his little girl-love was crying, it was different.

He was a man, strong with man's devotion, and she was a woman, weak with woman's tears.

Swiftly he advanced towards her (forgetting that his love was unconfessed and unaccepted, forgetting his own humility and fancied unworthiness—everything, except that he loved her), and kneeling beside the divan, he took her right masterfully into his arms. (Of *course*, I willed him to do it—it's one of my most approved methods.)

"My darling! My dear little love," he murmured. "Don't cry, sweetheart, oh, don't cry; it hurts me. I love you so, I love you so, my Vallie—my Vallie!"

With a look of half-glad, half-agonised non-comprehension on her face, Vallie wrested herself from his embrace.

"How can you, how *can* you say you love me, when, when——"

"When I have not dared to speak before? O! my dear, a woman can't guess at the fears of a man who *really* loves. *Now* I dread to ask you if you care, as I have dreaded all these months, because, if you say 'no,' why, I shall be just about as soulless as the lay-figure I have had made for you!"

"L-lay figure?"

"Yes, you know you said that the usual lay-figure was the most incomplete contrivance ever left unfinished; and that 'a thing must be able to move to keep still gracefully.' Well, longing to be of use to you and the art which is my rival, I have had a waxen and completely-jointed figure put together and furnished with springs that make movement possible. It seems to me quite successful; by pressing a spring on the head it will move forward, hold out its arms, and behave most usefully! I'll send it up later; it's now in my study . . . But never mind about wax women, when — dearest, *dearest*, what is the matter?"

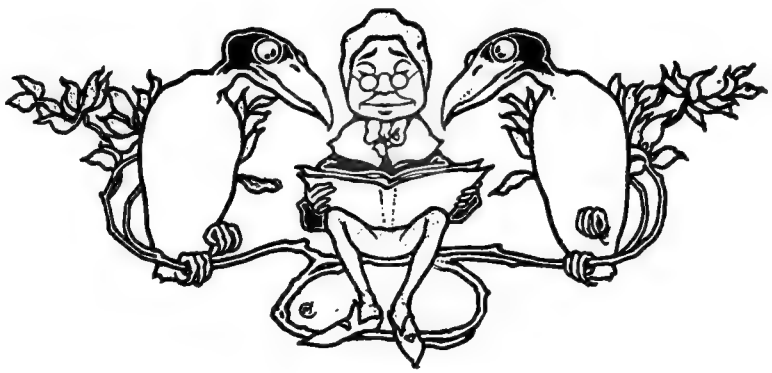
With a glad swift movement Vallie dried the tears that were once more over-brimming, then, quite bravely and steadily, she *told* him what was the matter.

When the explanation was finished I felt that there was no need for me to linger any longer. . . . .

Humbly, Ambition stepped down and took a lower place; once again, I, a little boy, had defeated her! — while Vallie and Oscar came hand-in-hand into my world of kisses.

There was nothing more for me to do, so I packed up my arrows and flew to the new millionaire in Park Lane.

(I was anxious to get his golden god off its pedestal).



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Birds, Animals, and Reptiles Kept by Boys and Girls at School.

By Wilfred Mark Webb, F.L.S.

Of recent years the keeping of pets at school has been recognised as a valuable aid to the the education of children.

Apart from the opportunities afforded in studying the habits and peculiarities of animals, pets have another sphere of usefulness. The regular attention that they require has a considerable influence in forming the character of their young keepers.

No doubt when the benefits arising from this delightful fashion of acquiring a knowledge of natural history are fully realised, the keeping of pets will be encouraged in many more schools.

Children living in large cities and towns cannot possibly gain a practical knowledge of the smaller common animals, except from studying those kept in captivity. They cannot, as their more fortunate comrades of the country, sally out into the fields and watch the rabbits gambolling outside their warren, and the birds building nests or feeding their young. What glimpses of bird and animal life they may obtain must be derived from their pets. Thus it will be seen that to the town child pets are of vastly more importance than to the country child.

Tame rats are much favoured by boys. The little animals are very harmless, and seldom bite.

Christchurch Endowed Infant School is an excellent example of a town school, where pets hold an important place in the training of young children. Here the majority are drawn from the ranks of birds and animals that for

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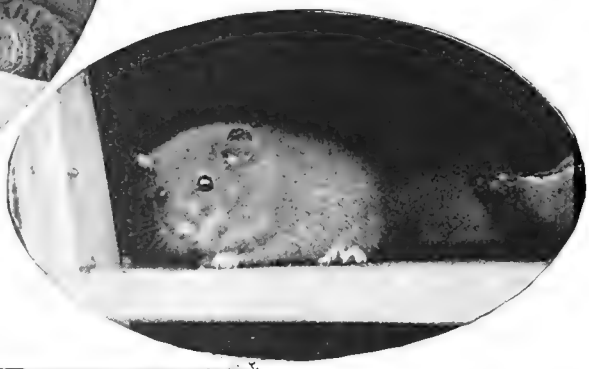

The queer pet of a small schoolgirl is a sleek, old toad. He is a most amusing fellow to watch catching wasps and flies, and has got quite to know his young mistress. On the right is a pretty little dormouse. These tiny creatures make delightful pets, and become extraordinarily tame.

A pair of tortoises.

generations past have been born and bred in captivity.

It must not be supposed, however, that more out-of-the-way creatures are not among the inhabitants of the school menagerie. To a number of small children several large snails are a never-failing source of amusement. Amongst the older pupils snakes prove a great attraction, and are handled without the slightest fear.

Although the pupils delight in playing with their reptile pets, they naturally hold but a very secondary place in their affections. A tame rat and a guinea-pig, perhaps, come first. Each of these has its own particular little attendant, whose duty it is to see that his particular animal or bird is regularly fed and kept clean.

Not long ago the pets were shown at the Nature Study Exhibition, Burlington Gardens. On the day when High School girls and their governesses visited the exhibition, the animals were greeted with "What a *sweet* rat! What a *dear* guinea-pig!" Beyond this the little maidens could find no other words to express their admiration.

This green lizard is one of the inmates of the "menagerie" at a girls' High School.

Later on, the arrival of County Council School boys, many of whom had never seen such animals outside a naturalist's shop, caused much amusement. One boy stood for quite a long time admiring two rats.

"That is not a bad rat, Bob," he ejaculated presently.

A few minutes before a small apple had been given to the rats, and as they had already an abundance of food, it lay on the bottom of the cage untouched. Bob noticed the fruit.

"I say, look there!" he exclaimed, "why, that old rat has laid an egg."

To this ignorance of dumb creatures may be ascribed the many cases

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The aquarium is a never ceasing subject of interest to school children.

of cruelty of which we constantly read. Were the teaching of simple natural history and the keeping of pets to become general throughout the schools of Great Britain, such offences would be rare. Cruelty arises through ignorance, and when once a fondness for dumb creatures is cultivated, it ceases to exist.

The horror with which the majority of people regard snakes is to a certain extent due to their scant knowledge of these reptiles. Out of the many varieties that exist, very few are dangerous or even harmful to human life. To illustrate this dread of snakes, an amusing incident happened at the Exhibition of School Pets.

During the afternoon one of the young keepers discovered that his snake had managed to escape. An alarm was raised, which, when the spectators heard the cause, cleared them as if by magic from the neighbourhood of the cage. After searching vainly for some time, the young keeper suggested that his snake might have sought the warmth of the hot-water pipes, and would be, most likely, under the grating on which an old lady happened to be standing. A terrified shriek followed this announcement, and the old lady displayed a sudden agility surprising in one of her years.

Of course, in schools where pets are kept, the masters are compelled to keep a watch to see that they are properly looked after. A boy may lavish much affection on his four-footed friends, but neglect entirely to feed them and clean their cages.

To meet this fault it is customary for a master or mistress to make a daily inspection of all places, rabbit-hutches, dove-cotes, and kennels, and to place a mark against the name of the owner of an uncared-for pet.

The boys at a college for the deaf keep a large number of tame mice, besides other animals.

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Three marks carries with it the punishment of having to dispose of that pet. However, it is pleasant to know that there is seldom occasion to enforce such drastic measures. Children may neglect their pets at times. More often this arises, not from a lack of interest in them, but through forgetfulness.

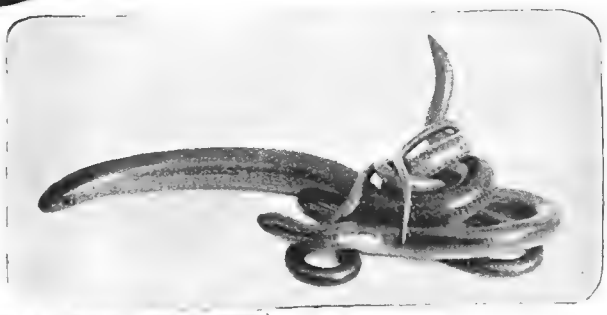
This snake has been kept by the pupils of a boys' school for over three years. Boys do not display the slightest fear of these reptiles, allowing them to twist about their arms with the most perfect composure. The picture on the left shows a small boy holding a blindworm.

Anyone who has seen school children playing with their four-footed friends must have been struck with the affection that they display for them. The total absence of fear in the little creatures in itself points to the kindness with which they are accustomed to be treated.

Amongst feathered pets, pigeons, doves, canaries, and fowls figure as the chief favourites of school-children.

At one school a certain small boy has chosen for his pet a hen of no particular breed. Poultry are proverbially stupid, but, owing to the attention bestowed on it, this fowl has become remarkably tame and intelligent. It follows its young master around the playground, and when tired will allow itself to be picked up and fondled like a cat.

A curious characteristic of this hen is its delight in looking at coloured pictures. Ordinary black-and-white drawings have no charm for it.



A bunch of young blindworms reared at a village school.

A lizard captured in France, and kept at a girls' High School.

But let its young master bring out a book of coloured prints, and the hen will gaze at each one with the greatest appreciation.

Of all pets, none, I think, repay the attention bestowed on them so much as toads and frogs. Their slow movements and sudden springing into life at the sight of a fly or cockroach, together with the quaint way in which they gobble down their prey, make them the most

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Tortoises, although devoid of all intelligence, make interesting pets.

interesting pets imaginable. Unfortunately, these ugly little reptiles have a peculiar habit of escaping from their quarters. Frogs do not thrive in such dry surroundings as toads. In captivity they seem to have a craving for water, consequently when they escape they invariably seek a damp place. Two frogs belonging to a certain high school managed one day to find an outlet from their glass cage. Keeping together, as is their custom, the little creatures started off on a voyage of discovery. Their disappearance was soon discovered, but although a careful search was immediately made, it was not until the next day that Master Froggy and his mate were found.

Frogs are undoubtedly the quaintest and most delightful little reptiles to keep in captivity

Then one of the pupils happened to look in the bathroom. And there, comfortably squatting in the middle of a dish, placed to catch the drippings of a defective cistern, she found the lost frogs. No doubt the frogs had been having a glorious time, imagining as the water dripped down upon them that they were out in a summer shower.

On another occasion a lizard escaped from her cage in the schoolroom. These little animals when they break loose in a room seem to be filled with a desire to climb. Thus when this one found itself free it ran up the curtain and hid itself on the cornice running over the window.

The next morning the servant came in as usual to clean the room. Nothing happened until she began to shake the curtains. This caused the lizard to lose its balance, and, making a headlong dive, it alighted right on the top of the maid's cap.

The result can be imagined. Shriek after shriek echoed through the schoolroom from the terrified girl. Her cries brought the cook and page-boy to the rescue. But seeing the cause, they drew back to consider how they could capture the terrible creature.

Meanwhile the lizard had crawled down to the floor, and the housemaid was indulging in a mild attack of hysterics.

In the end the problem was solved by the cook dispatching the page-boy for a long shovel. And, very gingerly, the harmless little lizard was scooped up from the floor, and carried in fear and triumph back to its quarters.

In schools where pets are permitted a strong keenness for natural history exists. This is shown by the increased interest that the pupils take in country rambles. To them their walk is not merely undertaken for exercise, but to give them an opportunity of watching birds and animals in their wild state, similar to those that they keep at school.

The prickly hedgehog, with his curious propensity of curling himself up into a ball when alarmed, is one of the pets of a small schoolboy.

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Being Extracts from a Married Uncle's Diary.

This time, on being appealed to by my sister Constance to take her "dear boys" for a week of their Easter holidays, I stood firm. Nerves not in sufficiently good order to bear another visit from Max and Tommy just at present. Explained this to dear Constance —Dear Constance sighed. Dislike people sighing when I make statements about my nerves. Disliked matters still more when my sister said:

"Really, Charlie, I think you are getting more 'tibby' than ever."

Why "tibby"?

Searched dictionary and failed to find word "tibby." Secretly rejoiced at this. Felt I had scored off dear Constance when I told her. So gratifying, as dear Constance almost invariably scores off me. Never more so than when she succeeds in "planting" my graceless nephews on me during their holiday time. Know I shall have to ask them to stay, later on in year. Must fortify nervous system before then by course of tonic or sea-bathing. Or might try Harrogate waters. Max and Tommy very wearing.

Wonder why I, of all men, should be curs —blessed—with two such awful little bea— boys—for nephews?

To-day I received from Max following descriptive letter.

"Dear Uncle Charlie,

"Wee're spending our summer holidays at home witch is rather rot. The Govnor dussent do ennything for our amewsment, and he issent a bit amewsing himself—dellykitt people aint, are they? The first few days I startid keeping a Diry, but soon got sick of it. The only entries Ide got for the first day we were home, were:

"Beasely rainy day. Skalded my tongue with hot tea at breakfast. Gave piece of Haddik, well pepperd, to the cat, who let go a yell and bolted to the door, upsetting flower-pot thing ass she went. Govnor sed it was all *my* fault—beasely unfair—seems *I* can't do ennything rite.

"Went to stables and ragged James, the groom—James got orfly shirty. Jolly good mind to hit him in the eye, but thought praps, Ide better not, ass he's two sizes bigger than me.

"Rain stopped in afternoon, so ass there was nothing to amews me, I walked to Tosher's Farm, climed over the wall, and—met Tosher. T. was orfly rood, and sed, 'What did I mean by it?' So I sed, 'Oh, orl rite, if you don't like me to come here, I won't,' and was walking orf when he called out, 'Don't you let me catch you climing over my wall again, or Ile lock you up.'

"I felf rather an ass.

"Went into anuther farmyard and got a long stick and began to stir up a big black pig with it. The pig seemed quite amewsed—at leest, he began hollering like beans, and then an afishus sort of farmer chap interfeared, and gave me a strong hint to go—took me by the ear and led me inter the road.

"Waited until he'd got out of site, and then drove some of his turkeys a mile down the road to next farm and mixed 'em up with

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"An afishus sort of farmer chap . . . took me by the ear and led me inter the road."

anuther flock. Returned home, longing for sumthing to do and quite disconesolate. No criket, no football—oh, it *is* rot! I wished I was at Uncle Charlie's. You *can* rag there!

"Well, the next day I chucked keeping a Diry, and suddenly thought that though there wassent any criket, there was goff. So I made young Stinker" (I wish he wouldn't call his brother "Stinker") "carry the Govnor's clubse, and we startid off to the lynx. Then I told Stinker he mite play if we could get a caddie. We got one, and then we comenced.

"Of coarse, goff is orl rot compaired to criket and football, but ennything's better than sitting at home over the books the Govnor's always wanting us to read.

"Well, my first shot at goff I cut a peace of turf rite out, and it hit Stinker in the eye. He got orfly enoide, and I sed it served him rite for standing in the way.

"Then he startid to play, and the first ball he hit, he missed. At least, I don't mean that eggsactly, but he missed the ball he hit—he missed *at* the ball—no, I mean, he hit at the miss—oh, blow it! you know what I mean, Uncle Charlie, don't you?

"I took a second shot, and my ball flew out at rite angils, and cort the caddie on the back part of him, and he howled. Well, he shouldn't have bin looking the uther way, should he?

"I told him he oughter look out for himself, and by gove, he did, for at my next shot he bolted fifty yards off, ass he sed I wassent safe.

"I got a lot of good shots, though they diddent go very far, and finelly I holed out in 37—Stinker took 39, and the caddie seemed to find it very amewsing, as he rored with larfter till I told him to shut up, and that rearly diddent matter how many strokes a feller took, but only the stile in witch he played.

"Then he larfed again, and sed I must be a funny sort of player, and I sed he was a sily young ass, and then he got shirty and chucked my—I mean the Govnor's—clubse on the ground and sed 'Carry them yourself.'

"Then I tride a skornfle, withring remark, and sed, 'You fathead, d'you think I'me going to stand your beasely cheek?' And he sed, 'Stand it or sit it, witch you like,' and I spose he thought that orfly sarcakstic; then he folded his arms and tride to look defyunt.

"I dunno eggsackly what happened next, but suddinly we—me and the caddie—were rolling over and over on the ground pummelling each other like mad, and two fellers

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in red coats were yelling out 'Fore!' to us to get out of the way, ass they were going to drive. Well, of coarse, we were too busy to stop, and finelly we struggelled till we fell over a bunker together, and the caddie being underneath, he cort his head a whop and it knocked him out of time.

"I looked up and saw the red-coated chaps rushing up in an orfle wax, so I thought Ide better bunk, witch I did, and so did Stinker. I dunno what happened to the caddie.

"We got home orl rite and were larfing over it when Stinker suddinly sed:

"'Where are the clubse?'

"By gum, we had forgoten them wen we bunked and left them on the lynx!

"If the Govnor wantid to play next morning, there *would* be a row! He's orfly unreasenabble in littel things like that—he makes too mutch fuss about trifools. Altogether, the prospect was gluemy when we came down to breakfust next day. But the govnor sed he diddent feel well—witch is orl rot, of coarse. *I* never feel ill eggsept I've been on the gorge or had a hapenny cigret.

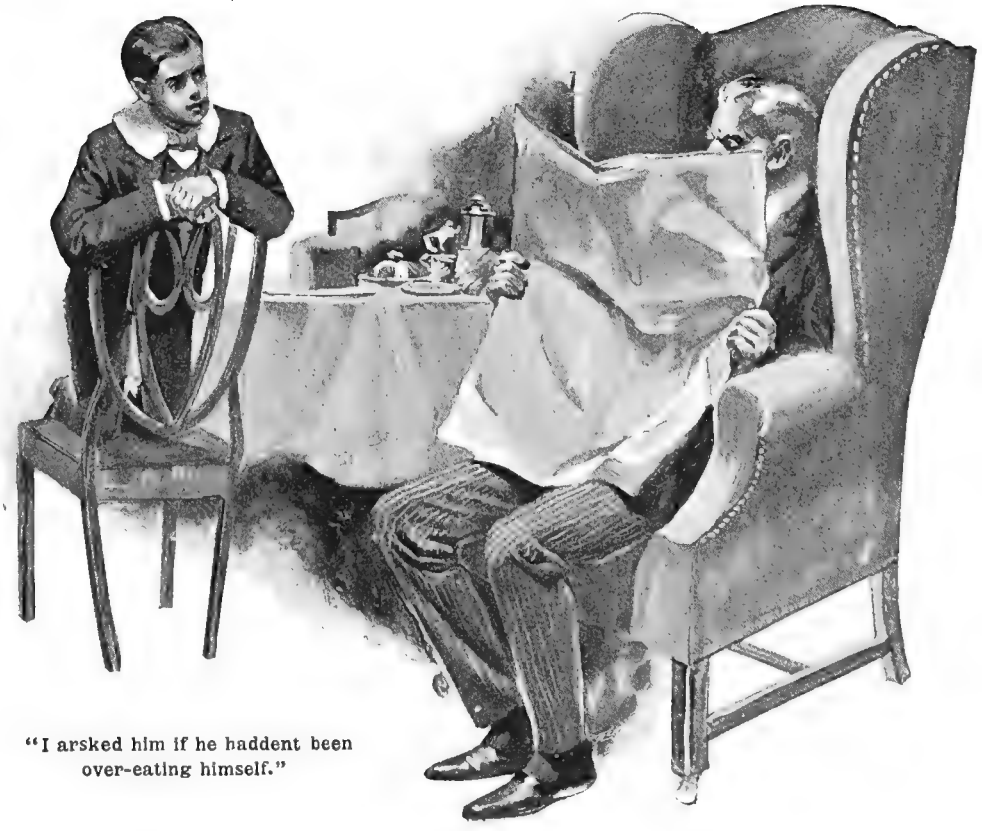
"I arsked him if he haddent been over-eating himself, becos I know that's jest what he'd have sed if *I'de* bin ill—and he got rather wild, and when I sed I thought it was a mistake for people when they got old, to eat so mutch, he got orfly drawn and told me I was egstreamly impewdent and that my owtragus conduct was one of the sorrers of his life!

"*Me* a sorrer! Fancy!

"But ass he was in this nasty mood I thought it would be better to go and try to find those clubse. So we started orf and hunted orl over the beasely lynx and couldn't see a sine of them. And that same caddie came up again and threttend to have me up for a salt if I diddent give him harf-a-crown. So I sneard and sed 'didn't he wish he mite get it.'

"And he sed if I diddent pay up he'd corl a bobby, and I sed if he did Ide charge him with steeling my clubse and I orlso sed if he tride to get money by threts Ide summon him for embezzlyment.

"That fritend him I think, becos he went orf swaring and saying he'd have the law on me—I notis that wenever a feller ses that, it



"I arsked him if he haddent been over-eating himself."

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meens he's got the worst of the quarel and knows it.

"Jest then, one of those red-coated fellers came up and reckonised me and larfed litely and sed:

"'Hullo, young shaver! You're the boy who was fiting with the caddie yestiddy.'

"I sed that 'I was pointing out the caddie's faults to him certainly, and——'

"But he rored with larfter, then, and gave me a two-bob peice and sed:

"'I know who you are, but you needn't be afraid—I shan't tell the General' (meaning the Govnor) 'I like to see a boy with a bit of devil in him, and I'm sure you're an orfle little devil!'

"Then I larfed too. He was a jolly good sort, wasn't he, Uncle Charlie?

"And then he went on:

"'You'll find the General's clubse at the club-house. I sent a boy in with them after you two decamped yesterdy.'

"'Well, you *are* a brick!' I sed. 'Do you know my Uncle Charlie? He's a brick, too, tho' he *is* rather an old ass about sum things—he's too fidgety, but he's orfly good to us and genrus in his tips, too. You'd like him.'

"He only larfed again and shook hands, and then he gave Stinker a two-bob piece, too. Only I found out drectly he'd gone that Stinker's two bob was a harf-crown. So I couldn't stand that, and I collard it and gave him my two bob insted. Fancy, the little sneak wouldn't have sed anything about it if I hadn't twigged.

"Well, ass we were on the spot, we thought weed have another game, so got out the clubse, and diddent have a caddie, and got on mutch better, egsept that I had a slite accident, and broke the Govnor's favrit driver. I tride to stick it with Giant Sement wen I got home, but, orltho it *looks* orl rite, I can't help wundring what'll happen the first wack the Govnor takes with it.

"And if he spots the sement round the edges, my eye! *Won't* there be a jolly old row!

"Well, we were at the 4th hole, and jest putting, wen young Stinker sed Ide played one more than him wen it was realy one less. I sed he was a liar, and we had a bit of a row, and orl the while sum fellers who were behind us and wanted to hit on to the green were yelling themselves black in the face to make us get out of the way. 'Fore! Fore!' they kept shouting, and at larst one of the fellers played and hit me an orfle crak, and stung me up like mad.

"It made me in an orfle wax, and I cort Stinker a jolly good smak on the hed. If it haddent been for him kicking up a row, I shouldn't have been hit. Then I waited till the feller who drove the ball came up, and told him he must be an ass and a cad, too. He turned red with fewry, and sed 'ill-mannered cubse had no business on goff lynx,' and I sed he aparrently diddent even know the Rools of Goff; and then I sed I should speak to the Govnor about his driving inter me, and told him who the Govnor was—and then he looked orfly sheeppish, becos my Govnor's the Pressydent of the club.

"So I scored orf him pretty well, I think. Orl the same, it herts orfly.

"You know I have littry tasts, uncle Charlie. You remember that riping gost story I wrote for a Xmas maggotseen, witch didn't publitch it, well, I'me now writing a book on goff. It's to be corled 'The Goffers Guyed,' a handbook for the use of schools, by a Vettran Player.

"Well, you see, I've done a lot of goff these holidays, and know orl about it. I've apointed Stinker sub-eddyter. I can't, of coarse, give it you orl here—you will be able to see it and buy yourself a copy wen its publitched; but Ile jest give you a spessymen or two of the rools I've invented speshally for the use of our school. I think they'll be found very usefool. Praps you could pick up a tip or two from them and mite like to introduce them into your own golf club?

"Rool I.—It is the duty of every goffer wen he cuts a blob of turf out to go and put it back again, or he'll jolly well get his hed smakd.

"Rool II.—Wen another feller's making a tee, you must not shove him over.

"Rool III.—Wen a goffer looses his ball, that's no reason why he should go and try to bag any other feller's.

"Rool IV.—Any feller wishing to pass another feller can do so if he's bigger than the other feller and the other feller takes a licking from the first feller. If he isn't, he'd better not try it on.

"Rool V.—The subskription for the whole season shall be eighteenpence.

"Rool VI.—If any member's subskription's in arrear for more than two hours arfter school on the first day of term, any member of the comitty may go and colect it with a criket-stump.

"Well, that's all—no more news at present, Uncle Charlie. Shall look forward to seeing you and Aunt Molly again very soon.

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"I say, we get a Merrit Holiday Saturday to Monday in the middle of term. It's rather slow to go home to one's people, ain't it?

"I read in a book the other day 'The tyred brain-worker requires change ass well ass rest.' Well, it ain't mutch change going to be jawed by the Govnor and asked your dates and gography questions and if six herrings and a harf cost sevenpince-hapeny, how many close can you send to the wash for ninepince, is it?

"So if you happened to want a feller's help in hanging pictures, or knocking nails in, or unpacking hampers or anything, jest at that time, you mite remember that I and Stinker would be quite at libberty to spend that Saturdy to Mondy, *shay voo*, ass they say in French. I hope you won't get a wrong impreshon and think Ime hinting for an invitation, becos its reelly nothing of the sort. And now good-bye with love from both us to both you.

"Yours affecshontly,

"MAX.

"P.S. There's been three fites orlreddy over Rool VI. This looks omnibus—I mean ommynus—don't it?"

So thoughtful of Max to suggest my borrowing a hint from these highly original "rools." Really that boy's impudence can only be described as massive. How am I to escape the awful infliction of entertaining these two little dev—dears I mean—on their "Merrit Holiday"? Prospect of having them here so upsetting—must consult dear Mollie on subject.

* * * * *

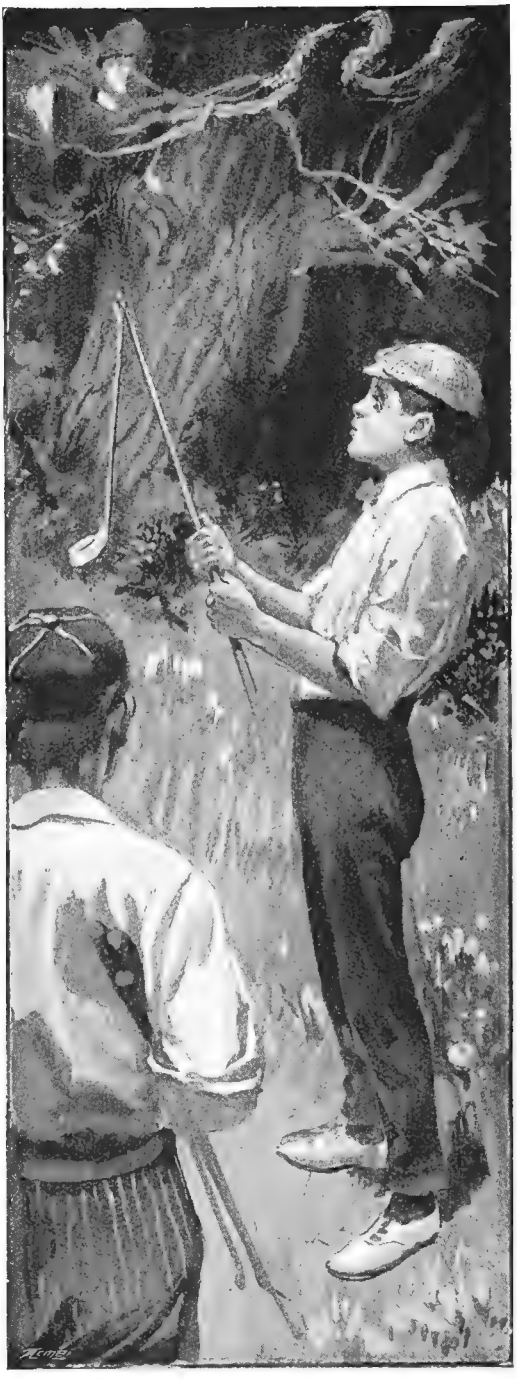
Have now consulted dear Mollie, and dear Mollie says:

"Oh, *of course* we'll ask them, Charlie."

"Think so, dear?" I say feebly, "seems to me that life would be altogether better, brighter, and more beautiful without the da—dear boys."

Dear Mollie pats my cheek, and laughs at me. Dislike being laughed at. Explain this. Dear Mollie says it is good for me; also that Max and Tommy "take me out of myself." Agree in this, no time to even think of one's meals when these brats are present.

Argue with Mollie for some time, but, as usual, have to submit in the end. How can I—what could I—I mean is there any way of escaping the infliction in future, I wonder? Greatly fear that my prospects of so doing are remote—or to quote the irrepressible Max himself, "gluemy."



"We thought weed have another game, so got out the clubse . . . I had a slite accident and broke the Govnor's favrit driver."

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PALMISTRY EXTRAORDINARY

A Duologue.

By A. Demain Grange.

Characters:

Ethel Maydew, *An Amateur Palmist.* Guy Ralston, *An Unbeliever.*

Scene: A Palmist's Tent at a Charity Bazaar.

The scene represents the interior of a small marquee. There is a curtained entrance at the back, and another entrance, also curtained, on the right. Near the centre is a table, with two chairs. The scene is faintly illuminated by a shaded lamp on the table.

Ethel Maydew is discovered standing by the entrance at the back, looking cautiously out between the curtains. She wears a long scarlet cloak with a hood attached, and holds in her hand a small black mask. Her attitude is suggestive of an amused interest in some person who has just left the marquee.

Ethel (*laughing gaily*). Oh, what fun this palmistry is! I never thought that telling fortunes could be half so amusing. It is so easy, too, when you know all about the people you are dealing with. Poor old Lady Gadabout! She looked quite pleased when I told her she would marry and live to a ripe old age. She is considerably over forty, and has been married twice already! I think that it is just as well that people don't know who I really am, or they mightn't be so struck by my wonderful prognostications. That is where the best part of the fun comes in! (*Again looking through the curtains.*) I wonder who I shall have next. Not a stranger, I hope, because that might be rather unfortunate for *both* for us! But as I know most of the people here, I think I am fairly safe. And for the rest—well, they can't expect much for half-a-crown at a charity bazaar! (*Starting suddenly.*) Why, there is Guy—Mr. Ralston, I mean. What can *he* be doing here? And—yes—he is with that horrid Mrs. Golightly, *as usual!* Of course, I know he and I are no longer friends, and I am never going to speak to him again; but that is no reason why he should make himself *ridiculous*. She is nearly double his age, and a *widow*, too! It—it makes one feel quite sorry for him. (*Peers through the curtains and then draws back hastily.*) Good gracious! He has left her, and is coming straight over here. I do hope he won't come in. And yet what a splendid chance it would be to find out if—if he really does care for her. Not that it matters much, of course; but still, I should like to know. (*A bell rings outside. She goes quickly over to the right.*) Oh dear! there he is. (*In a mysterious voice.*) Come in! (*Turns and goes out through the curtained entrance on the right. As she does so Guy Ralston enters through the curtains at the back.*)

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GUY (*looking round*). H'm! Nobody here. That is part of the performance, I presume! Probably the lady will condescend to materialise, or whatever they call it, later on. In the meantime, I will do myself the honour of offering myself a chair. (*Comes down and takes a seat on the left of the table.*) What a silly business this palmistry is! How any reasonable person can believe in it beats me. But, of course, nobody is expected to be *reasonable* at a charity bazaar. That must be my excuse for coming here. That and Mrs. Golightly's limpet-like attentions. Bit of a nuisance, Mrs. Golightly! She is not bad-looking, I admit, in a china doll sort of way, and I found her rather amusing at first; but one can have too much of a good thing; and when it comes to an open flirtation—well, a short, stout widow, of uncertain age, and, I suspect, an equally uncertain temper, isn't exactly my style! (*Thoughtfully.*) No. When I contrast her with Ethel—Miss Maydew, I suppose I ought to say now—I realise precisely what *is* my style. True, Ethel behaved abominably that night at the Twickenham's, and I haven't forgiven her yet; but, all the same, I wish—— (*Pauses abruptly as the curtains on the right are swept aside, and Ethel enters. The hood of the cloak is drawn closely over her head, and the upper part of her face is hidden behind the black mask. Her manner is suitably impressive, and she speaks in a carefully-disguised voice. Guy rises.*)

ETHEL (*solemnly*). Pray be seated. You wish to consult me about your future?

GUY (*smiling rather nervously*). Oh—thanks! Yes, that is the idea.

"You have been in love *twice?*"

ETHEL. You understand, of course, that my —er—services are given on this occasion in the interests of charity.

GUY (*diving into his pocket*). Oh, yes, of course. Half a-crown, I think? (*Lays a coin upon the table.*)

ETHEL. Thank you. Now let me look at your hand. (*He holds out his hand. She takes it somewhat diffidently and proceeds to examine it with minute care.*)

GUY (*uneasily*). Is—is it so very bad?

ETHEL. It is a very complex hand, and one not easy to read. There is much that is good in it, and also, I am afraid, much that—er—might be better.

GUY. Dear me!

ETHEL. The life line is well marked——

GUY. Thank goodness!

ETHEL. But the line of *heart*—ah, well! (*Sighs again dismally.*)

GUY. What is wrong with that?

ETHEL. You have been in love *twice?*

GUY (*confidently*). I think not!

ETHEL. You — you are in love now.

GUY. That's a fact!

ETHEL (*starting*). Oh——! (*Drops his hand and stares at him blankly. Then, recollecting herself, she seizes it again, and, straightening out his fingers with a series of vicious little jerks, continues her examination.*) The lines here plainly indicate that you have lost your heart twice, at least; but perhaps the first time you only *fancied* you were in love.

GUY (*easily*). Ah, that must be the explanation! But what—what about the second time, then?

ETHEL (*vindictively*). Oh, *that* is obviously real enough *at present!*

GUY. And will be for *ever!* (*Stares thoughtfully before him.*)

ETHEL (*continuing*

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her examination). The *person* you are in love with is not young.

GUY. She *was* the last time I saw her!

ETHEL (*aside*). Oh, what a fib!

GUY (*enthusiastically*). She was young, pretty, and altogether adorable!

ETHEL (*aside, scornfully*). That Golightly *thing!*

GUY. I loved her then, as I love her now—passionately and devotedly. But——

ETHEL (*eagerly*). You have quarrelled?

GUY (*dejectedly*). Yes.

ETHEL. I knew you had quarrelled.

GUY (*staring at her*). You *knew*——?

ETHEL (*airily*). Oh, yes! It—it was in the lines. You could never have been happy with her. She isn't at all the sort of woman you evidently imagine her to be.

GUY. How do you know that?

ETHEL. Oh, I can read it in your hand. And then, she has been married before.

GUY (*starting up*). I swear she hasn't!

ETHEL (*surprised*). Surely you know——?

GUY (*angrily*). No; I don't know. And what is more, I don't believe you do.

ETHEL. But, my dear sir, the lines——

GUY (*impatiently*). I don't care a fig for the lines, and I am not going to listen to any more of this nonsense. Good afternoon. (*Strides up towards the curtains at the back.*)

ETHEL (*aside, clasping her hands*). Can he mean——? (*Turning quickly.*) Oh, don't go! I—I want to ask you something *very* important.

GUY (*pausing*). Well——?

ETHEL (*in a low voice*). I—I may have made a mistake.

GUY (*returning*). Ah! (*He regards her furiously. She catches his eye, and promptly pulls herself together, resuming the disguise of manner and voice she had momentarily forgotten in her excitement.*)

ETHEL (*more calmly*). It is just possible—only *just* possible, you know—that we were not thinking of the same person.

GUY. I see. (*Sits again, watching her with a puzzled expression on his face.*)

ETHEL (*uneasy under his glance*). The—er—lines sometimes get a bit mixed, as it were, and that naturally misleads one.

GUY. Just so. Of whom were you thinking?

ETHEL (*reflectively*). I was thinking of a short, stumpy little woman, with yellow hair, pale, washy, blue eyes, and a figure that is quite indescribable.

GUY. H'm!

ETHEL. And you——?

GUY (*staring before him*) I was thinking of a tall,* slender girl, with nut-brown hair, eyes of the deepest hazel, and a figure—by Jove! I find that indescribable, too!

ETHEL (*softly*). Ah!

GUY. She is just *perfection*, and nothing less.

ETHEL (*gently*). And you—you really do love this girl?

GUY. Really and truly I do.

ETHEL. Why, then, did you quarrel?

GUY (*in injured tones*). I didn't quarrel with her. *She* quarrelled with *me*.

ETHEL (*starting*). Oh!

GUY. Just before I turned up at a dance, after I'd told her I shouldn't be there, and she found me dancing with a—a certain widow.

ETHEL (*aside*). Exactly. (*Turning to him.*) But why didn't you dance with her?

GUY (*gloomily*). I wanted to, but she never gave me the chance!

ETHEL. Perhaps—perhaps she didn't understand.

GUY. She seemed to think I had been deceiving her in some way.

ETHEL (*quickly*). And hadn't you?

GUY (*indignantly*). Of course not! I merely happened to find myself disengaged at the last moment, and went to oblige my hostess, who I knew would be short of men. That's all.

ETHEL (*aside*). Oh, Guy!

GUY. A nice return for putting oneself out to oblige somebody! (*Stares frowningly before him.*)

ETHEL (*after a slight pause*). I wonder how the girl felt about it, on her side. Perhaps—perhaps I could tell, if you would let me see your hand again.

GUY. I don't think so.

ETHEL. Oh, I'm sure I could! (*Hastily.*) It is—er—wonderful what one can do with the aid of palmistry, you know.

GUY. H'm.

ETHEL (*artfully*). I might even be able to tell if she cared for *you*.

GUY. Really?

ETHEL. If—if it would interest you.

GUY. It would interest me more than anything else.

ETHEL. Very well, then, let me look. (*He holds out his hand. She takes it, and once more pretends to be deeply engrossed in it.*)

GUY (*anxiously*). Have you discovered anything?

ETHEL (*tracing a line with her finger*). Ah—yes—she thought you were deliberately trying to avoid her.

GUY. How absurd!

ETHEL (*coldly*). I think it was quite natural.

* This description can be altered to suit the person playing the part of Ethel.—AUTHOR.

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GUY. I couldn't get away from that wretched widow, you know.

ETHEL. Um! (*Frowns judiciously.*)

GUY. What else did she think?

ETHEL. She thought that you, too, were angry because she appeared at the dance when she had said she couldn't come.

GUY. I was a little surprised.

ETHEL. She only went because her young cousin begged her to see her through her first ball.

GUY (*starting*). Oh!

ETHEL (*pointedly*). And, naturally, she felt your conduct was a nice return for putting herself out to oblige somebody!

GUY (*virtuously*). What did I do?

ETHEL. You hardly looked at her, and you never asked her to dance once.

GUY (*frowning*). I wish I hadn't looked at her.

ETHEL. Why?

GUY. Because every time I did so she was flirting shamefully with a conceited-looking ass in uniform!

ETHEL (*suddenly*). Oh, Guy, I'm sure I wasn't! (*Springs up and turns away from him indignantly.*)

GUY (*rising*). You—? (*Advancing a step.*) Why——

ETHEL (*tearfully*). I th—think it is v-very mean of you to say s-such a th—thing! (*Takes out her pocket handkerchief and tries to wipe her eyes through the holes in the mask.*)

GUY (*staring at her blankly*). Ethel! (*She starts, recollecting herself, and hangs her head shamefacedly. A short pause ensues.*)

ETHEL (*twisting the handkerchief nervously*). Of course, you—you are angry with me.

GUY (*approaching her*). Why should I be angry with you?

ETHEL. Because of what I said.

GUY. On the contrary. I wouldn't have missed it for worlds.

ETHEL (*turning to him*). Wouldn't you?

GUY. No! (*After a slight pause.*) But, I say, you haven't yet told me what—what the girl thought.

ETHEL. Oh, I don't think I could tell you that.

GUY. Try. (*Slyly*). It is—er—wonderful what one can do with the aid of palmistry, you know.

ETHEL (*turning away*). Well, she thought just what you thought.

GUY (*dubiously*). H'm!

ETHEL (*hanging her head*). And she—she thinks just the same as you think now.

GUY (*eagerly*). You mean it—*really!*

ETHEL (*in a low voice*). Yes, Guy.

GUY. Ethel! (*Takes her into his arms.*) I can't kiss you with this thing on, you know. (*Removes the mask and then kisses her. As he does so, a bell is heard ringing outside.*)

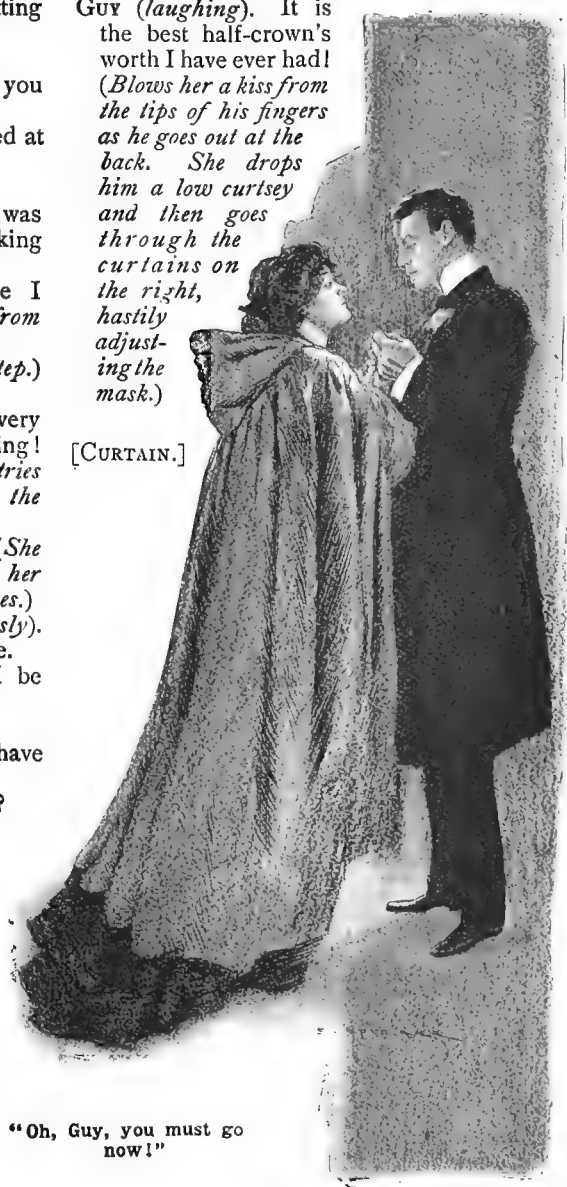
ETHEL (*breaking away from him*). Oh, Guy, you must go now!

GUY. Hang it all—! Well, I suppose I *must.* (*Moves up towards the curtains at the back.*) But I shall come again.

ETHEL (*archly*). It will cost you half-a-crown.

GUY (*laughing*). It is the best half-crown's worth I have ever had! (*Blows her a kiss from the tips of his fingers as he goes out at the back. She drops him a low curtsey and then goes through the curtains on the right, hastily adjusting the mask.*)

[CURTAIN.]



"Oh, Guy, you must go now!"

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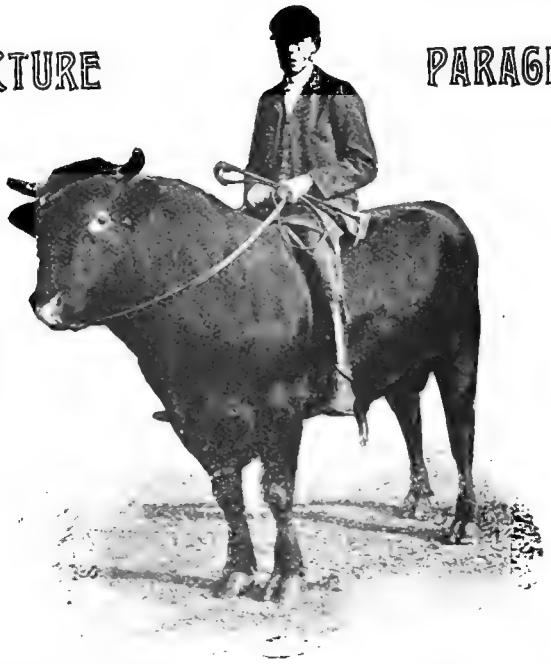
PICTURE PARAGRAPHS



This bull is more obedient and free from vice than many a horse. On it the owner rides about his farm and has even ridden to a local cattl show.

Oddities from all Parts of the World are Required for this Feature.

A NEW USE FOR CATTLE.

Not everyone would care to ride on a bull's bare back. In fact, there are few who relish standing within six feet of one—except from the opposite side of a gate or fence.

Yet Mr. Walter Beeby, of Kingstone, Derby, treats his bull as if it were a horse, riding on it about his farm, apparently unconscious that he is doing anything out of the way.

The idea of doing this occurred to him some little time ago. Seeing his stockman exercising the bull up and down the farmyard, Mr. Beeby attached a light rein to the bull's nose-ring, and vaulted on to its back. To his surprise Master Taurus did not in the least protest. Since then his master has ridden him all over the farm, guiding him by the rein with the most perfect ease. The bull is freer from vice than many horses. It gallops or walks at its master's will, and even when passing those of its own kind shows no inclination of becoming unmanagable.

CHARITY FOR A SECOND.

This clock-like machine has been adopted by the London Hospital Authorities for the purpose of collecting subscriptions. At the present time there are upwards of one hundred and fifty—all working for the same good cause.

One penny a second are the expenses of the London Hospital. When that amount is dropped into this machine the indicator moves one point, thus showing to the donor that he has kept the Hospital for one second.

By dropping a penny into the machine the indicator moves one point. Just think what that means! For one whole second you bear the entire expense of keeping the largest hospital in London. You pay for the upkeep of the medical staff, the nursing staff, the porters, and servants. But that is not all. You pay for the medicines that are daily dispensed and distributed to hundreds of sufferers.

Who could resist the temptation of bearing the expenses of so vast an undertaking?

Sixty pence gone every minute! Even Carnegie would hesitate to take a year's worth of seconds—£131,400 would buy many libraries, but support the London Hospital one year.

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A NOVEL MOTOR UNICYCLE.

WHETHER we shall see in the next few years cyclists careering down the Strand in this queer contrivance is a matter of surmise.

The weird-looking machine is a unicycle, and is claimed in many respects to be superior to its two-wheeled fellow. It is the invention of Signore Lilio Negroni, an Italian, of Milan.

The machine consists of a very large pneumatic-tyred wheel, running on an inner rim. The latter is so arranged that the large wheel, comprising the unicycle, runs smoothly round it. To the circular frame, or inner rim, is attached the driver's seat, and the motor that propels the machine.

The mechanical reaction necessary to driving the unicycle is obtained from the weight of the frame, together with that of the motor and cyclist.

Looking at the machine one would naturally imagine that it must be difficult to guide.

Such is not the case. Merely bending the body either to the right or left is sufficient to steer the machine in whichever direction the driver wishes. However, as an additional precaution, the inventor has provided the unicycle with a small steering-wheel, which, on being turned, moves the seat to whichever side desired, thus shifting the centre of balance, and guiding the machine. A clever automatic brake completes the equipment of this novel cycle.

A motor unicycle, invented by an Italian, of Milan.

A LARGE FRESH-WATER SPONGE.

THERE is an unmistakable likeness to mistletoe in the bunch of vegetation below. But only in the photograph. In reality the original does not bear the least resemblance to that well-known Christmas plant.

It is a fresh-water sponge, and was found last summer in the River Colne, at Thorney Weir Fishery, near West Drayton. A number of them were attached to the sides of an arch through which the river runs, bu the one shown in the picture was by far tthe finest specimen.

As the sponge lay in the large basin in which it was photographed, it measured thirteen inches across, and nearly nine-and a-half in length.

When taken out of the water it had a slimy coating, owing to the presence of animal matter, and a sharp fishy smell. This smell is peculiar to all sponges in their natural state, but with those found in fresh-water it can never be got rid of. Moreover, the latter, when dried, are extremely brittle, and crumble away under the least pressure.

A fresh-water sponge that was found in the River Colne, near West Drayton. It measured thirteen inches across, and was nine inches in height.

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THE LIGHTED WINDOW

A Weird Experience.

By Jessie Pope.

THE sudden slowing down of the train woke me from my doze with a start, and brought back the reality of the dimly-lighted railway carriage to my reluctant eyes. I had been dreaming of the dear heather hills, left behind that morning, and my heart, also left behind, had been light as air, until the sudden grinding of the brakes dispelled the dream, and reminded me that my month's holiday in the Highlands was over, and I was half-way back to London pavements.

I had not even the memory of a good-bye kiss to comfort me. He had merely taken my hand—the train bore us apart—and the cairngorm brooch fastening the sprig of white heather we had spent such heavenly days to find was the only visible token of all those tremulous memories.

Fortunately, I was alone in the carriage, and could shed a tear at will until sleep took pity on me, and now the train had stopped suddenly and recalled me to the bitter fact that at two-and-twenty I was at the end of all things. Opening the window I peered into the darkness—there was nothing to be seen but the level glitter of the lines beneath, and I drew back again with a forlorn shiver.

As I did so my cairngorm brooch caught against the window bar, and before my hand could fly to secure it, it had fallen down in the darkness outside. It was all I had of him—precious beyond price—and without the least hesitation I flung open the door and sprang down on the line after my treasure.

Searching frantically here and there between the cold silvery lines, I was too distressed at my sudden loss to notice a little sound in the distance—a little sound like a gust of wind that grew and grew from a gust to a gale, from a gale to a tearing hurricane. I looked up from my search in sudden amazement—saw a flash of round, radiant lights—and the down express was on me with a roar.

With a wild cry I flung myself across those treacherous lines, spurning them with winged feet, till I tripped across some low wires at the side and fell clutching at the grass beyond, while heaven and earth crashed above me in an overpowering, unending tumult.

Gradually the thunder died down, my brain cleared, and I found myself sitting on the far side of the line, safe and sound but considerably scared, with the lights of the down express twinkling out in the distance. From that moment the railway carriage I had loathed so much and discarded so lightly rose in my estimation by leaps and bounds, but when I picked myself up to return to it I saw to my dismay that it was no longer stationary, but was gliding away from me in the darkness.

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My compartment had already passed, the mail van was abreast, and in a few moments nothing would be left but the brake.

"Stop!" I shouted. "*Stop!*" and I began to run alongside the guard's van, expecting his head to look through the window. I shouted again, a break crept into my voice, but like water running through my fingers, the train slipped by; the tail lights suddenly flashed out crimson, watching my futile efforts to catch them in red-eyed amazement till they disappeared round the bend.

I stopped running, and, not forgetful of my late experience, picked my way to the side of the line where a telegraph-post loomed in the darkness.

I knew I was somewhere between Inverness and London, and that was all—somewhere in the dark void of the midnight country. It was more than I could bear, and, flinging my arms round the telegraph-post, I burst into sobs and tears.

"Oh, if you were only Donal'!" I cried convulsively to my tarry support. "I wouldn't mind then at all. Oh, Donal'! Why did I leave you?"

Then the thought of all the discovery of the open door and the empty carriage would mean, the newspaper paragraphs, the hue and cry through the country, saved me from collapse.

"And *now*," I thought, "perhaps he'll wish he'd kissed me."

Slightly comforted, I dried my eyes, and began to consider my position. Should I stay where I was till morning, or walk down the line in the hope of reaching a station? No; I had had enough of the line. Or should I strike across country on the chance of finding help and shelter?

But I felt such a desolate atom among so much unexplored darkness that I shuddered at the idea; and, glancing apprehensively over my shoulder, the problem was solved for me. A steady light pierced the gloom to my left, and, at the sight of it, the evanescent attractions of the telegraph-post vanished, and, with another look at the beacon-light, I began to slide down the embankment so eagerly that I was half-way through a thick thorn hedge at the bottom without intention of my own.

But, regardless of scratches and splinters, I stumbled on in the dark—sure of nothing but the ground beneath my feet, and that, apparently, very hard going. To add to my uncertainties, the light disappeared as soon as I reached the lower level; but I had a clear

I . . . saw a flash of round, radiant lights—and the down express was on me with a roar.

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idea of its direction, and pushed on, never thinking of brooks till I found myself on my hands and knees in the middle of one.

I was horribly scared, and, scrambling out of the muddy water, I began to run away in the opposite direction, which happened to be the right one; for all at once through the poles of a fir plantation just ahead of me I saw the light again, large, and clear, and close at hand.

Almost crying with relief and gratitude, I scrambled across the intervening space—which seemed generously sprinkled with brick-ends—until I was near enough to discover that the light shone from a window rather high up on the ground floor of a long, wooden building of curious shape.

In the darkness I fancied I saw other buildings near; but the only thing I could be sure of was my own beacon-light that had brought me safely to the end of my troubles. Twice I walked round the house to find a door without success, and, piling some brick-ends together beneath the window, I climbed up on them and peeped in.

At first I did not realise what I saw—slowly and by degrees the full horror dawned upon me. The room was long and low, with the further portions half hidden in shadow, but a guttering lamp on the wall, and a brazier of glowing coals, over which bubbled a black cauldron, illuminated that part near the window. There was evidently a strong draught blowing, for the light flickered, and added to the distortions of a man—already bowed and misshapen—who was the only living occupant of the room.

The only *living* occupant, for on a low table lay two figures, lifeless and rigid, and at the sight of them my fingers clutched convulsively at the window-frame.

The first was a woman, dark-haired and young, dressed in a gaudy array of village finery—threadbare satin and tarnished tinsel—that seemed to deny the dignity of death to the wide-eyed, staring face. One arm had slipped over the edge of the table, and a big red stone on the finger sent back a lurid flash to the glowing brazier.

Next, lay the lifeless form of an old, old man, partly covered by a cloak of rusty black. His hair and beard were white and flowing, and there was a venerable peace on his livid countenance. His hand had slipped from its covering, and pointed stiffly upwards to the window where I clung paralysed with the fascination of horror. But the living man was busy over something else at the far end of the table—something that might have been a heap of clothes, but for the dimly-defined shape beneath that betrayed its humanity.

His hand moved swiftly here and there, and the flickering lamplight revealed a pair of glittering scissors in his grasp. He stepped back to glance at the contents of the cauldron, but as he did so the stiff, pointing hand of the old man caught his eye. He seized it roughly, and tried to bend it down, without success; he twisted it up and down and from side to side, and then—oh, horror!—the hand came off in his grasp, and fell to the floor!

"Ah-h-h!!!" came the sharp scream that made the monster turn to the window as if he had been stabbed. I did not know that scream was mine—all I knew was that I was racing—stumbling—leaping—flying for dear life away into the dark world again—anywhere from the wicked horror of that lighted window. Then I heard him coming after me, and——

"Donal'!" I screamed. "Donal', help me!"

But Donal' was sound asleep hundreds of miles away, and there was nothing to save me from that thud, thud, thud, and the loud, panting breath coming closer and closer. Then all at once the life seemed to go right out of me; I doubled up and fell, as a huge hand gripped my shoulder and bore me down — down — down into darkness—stillness—nothingness.

* * * * *

"What a hard bed!" was my next thought —"and how lumpy!" then, opening my eyes and finding myself lying fully dressed on a heap of clothes in the tiny interior of a gipsy caravan, I began to seriously conjecture as to who and what I was.

At first the problem entirely floored me, and I went to sleep over it; it was not until hours later, when I opened my eyes to the same prospect, that the distant whistle of a speeding train branded yesterday on my memory in a burning flash. Yes, I evidently was in a caravan, and, what was more to the point, it was standing still, and the door was open.

Escape might still be possible, and, making my way rather unsteadily across the little room, I looked cautiously outside. The first thing my glance fell upon was the monster of the preceding night, seated on an upturned bucket peacefully peeling potatoes. In the daylight his face looked mild, and even benevolent, and the hump on his back excited pity rather than fear.

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Here and there, over the waste building ground—which was evidently the furthest outskirts of the town that I could see smoking beneath me in the hollow—were other caravans and tents, and right opposite to my wondering eyes was a long, low structure, half wood, half canvas, with a huge placard over the entrance bearing the legend:

NATIONAL AND IMPERIAL WAX-WORK EXHIBITION.

COME AND SEE ESTHER WADE, THE VICTIM OF THE RUINED BARN!

PATRONISED BY LONDON SOCIETY AND THE NOBILITY OF ENGLAND.

"Ah-h-h!!!" came the sharp scream that made the monster turn to the window as if he had been stabbed.

"Mother," said the hunchback, looking up, "here's the lady woke up."

I turned tremulously to the old gipsy woman, who hobbled up from the next van.

"Are those only waxworks in there?" I faltered.

"Yes, my lady," she replied, "and my son will be proud to show them to you—when ye're rested."

"Oh!" I said.

"If it 'adn't 'a been for 'im giving 'em a bit of a do up last night, 'e'd never 'a found ye. But ye did give 'im a skeer!".

"Oh!" I said again, and sat down.

They looked at me with silent curiosity, but left me to myself to think it all over. The gipsy caravan was not an ideal place for meditation, and I was conscious of the combined smell of paraffin and tainted mutton—the joint was hanging from a neighbouring shaft—yet the events of the preceding night had left me wearily incapable of making an effort. Once again the whistle of a speeding express roused me to the remembrance of home and anxious friends, and helped to bring me to myself. Calling my host and hostess, I told them as much as was necessary of my story, and then dispatched the hunchback to the town to send off a telegram and fetch me a cab.

That evening as I told my story at home, more than half an heroine, though I dwelt on my perils on the line, my escape from the express, and my midnight adventures across country, with considerable effect, I touched but lightly on the waxwork part of the performance—to tell the honest truth, I omitted it altogether.

So, after all, the loss of my cairngorm brooch was the worst of my adventures, and I don't worry about that now, for the simple reason that I've got a ring instead.

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How I went to the Ponsonbys' in my Flying Machine

① As I made it myself I know it's all right, so I embark, and prepare to look down on other poor things that have to go by the common or garden road.

② I am just going over a snowfield, where some horrid boys pelt me with snowballs – I have rather a job to get along.

③ But all goes well till I see the beautiful Floss riding in her motor with that ass Jackson driving her. I know he's proposing.

④ and it fills me with such wrath that I pull the wrong rope, and fall headlong into the pond – the end marked "Danger."

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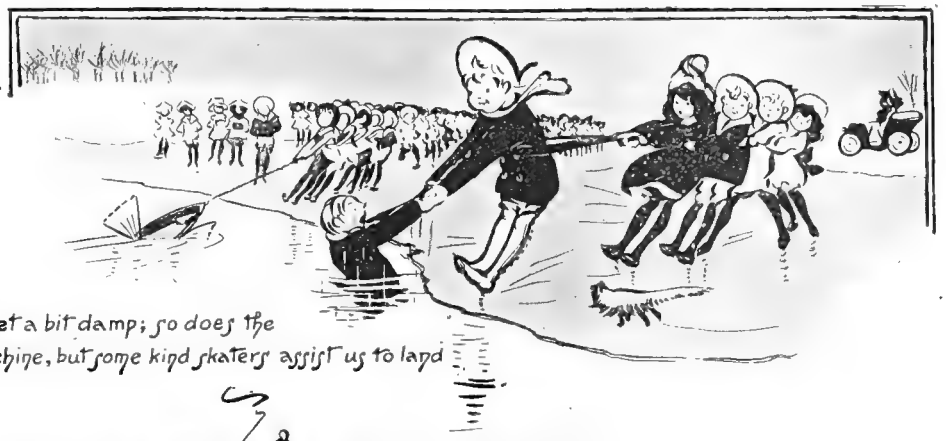
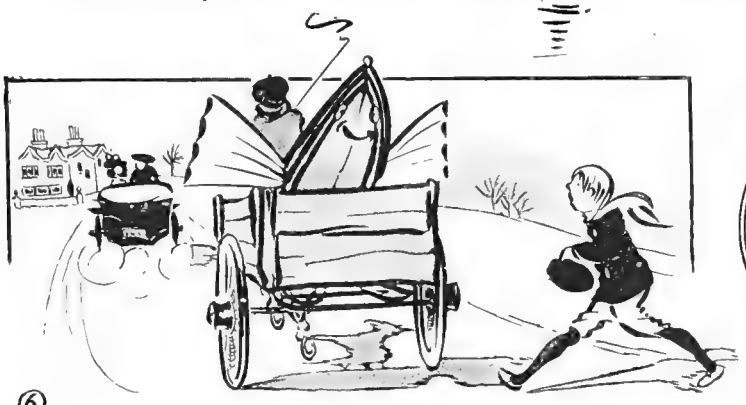


⑤ I get a bit damp; so does the machine, but some kind skaters assist us to land



⑥ I put my machine on a donkey cart as the sails are too wet to be of any use, and run behind to keep warm.

⑦ We catch up Floss and the man Jackson. They are very kind, and wrap me up in one of their rugs.

⑧ And we arrive at the Ponsonbys', where Floss, after much persuasion accepts me, so we go home together in the flying machine, and good little children take us for Santa Claus going home, and taking a fortunate little girl with him - after the Xmas festivities.

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A FRENCH MAID IN ENGLAND

What a Society Lady's-Maid has to Do.

By Nancy Dallas.

I can speak English very well now, but when I first came to this country it was very difficult for me. I had heard that the English of the *haute noblesse* made the best mistresses in the world, so I determined to attach myself to one of them, and to acquaint myself with the English aristocracy as soon as possible.

My first mistress, I soon discovered, was only on the borders of Society, and although she desired most ardently to cross that border, I do not think she has ever succeeded. As soon as I found this out I made my adieux, much to her chagrin, for never had she looked so *chic* or so *bien mise* as when I had the management of her wardrobe and *coiffure*. Since that time I have served milady, and do not wish to leave her, for many reasons.

But I have been requested to relate how I spend my day, and what milady requires of me, and I shall endeavour to do so, but if my English is sometimes a little strange, you must please excuse, for although Monsieur Brown, milord's valet, has helped me much, he was not always at hand to aid me with his elegant language.

Every morning at eight o'clock I go to milady's room with a cup of chocolate in the winter, and a glass of cold water in the summer—never tea, for that is so bad, so dangerous for the complexion. Then I bring her her letters, and whilst she is looking through them, I massage her gently for about a quarter of an hour. Previous to my arrival, a professional masseuse used to come daily, but I have learned this art so well that I soon proved to milady that the entrance of a stranger into her room was quite unnecessary.

I know so well the touch that is needed.

If the letters are disturbing, annoying, if a bill from Madame Valerie is amongst them, ah! the soothing strokes, the gentle manipulations that I use to calm milady's anger or distress, they never fail to have their effect. If, on the contrary, the news seems joyful and encouraging, a brisk invigorating stroke tends to increase the quick circulation, and add yet more to milady's good looks, for you must know, happiness is essential to real beauty.

Milady now takes her bath, about which she is most particular. The water must be tepid, always of the same temperature, and delicately scented with her own special perfume, with which all her wardrobe is permeated, so that it seems part of herself.

I will not tell you the name of this perfume, for it must not lose its value by being used commonly, but that it is delicious, exquisite I, who have used it, can assure you.

The *coiffure* takes some time to complete, and then milady robes herself in a pretty *negligée* in which she sits down to her breakfast, and I have some leisure in which to converse with the housekeeper or Monsieur Brown, and to arrange my affairs and make my plans for the day, until about half-past ten, when milady has to be attended to again before she goes out shopping.

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This is the hour when I generally receive those robes that milady wishes to wear no longer. Such beautiful creations! Such elegant costumes! Yesterday it was a black *mousseline de soie* trimmed with magnificent lace, and that I shall be able to use for myself. More often the robes are of a colour so delicate and of a make so elaborate that no maid of taste like myself would think of wearing them. But there are many establishments at which I can receive a handsome sum in exchange for these costumes, and, failing this, I know of many ladies in a less exalted society, who are delighted to have these works of art to copy.

Before milady goes out I attend to her hands, which are long, and white, and delicate, and one of her chief cares. I know well the duties of a manicurist, and take a pleasure in keeping her nails smooth and polished and the tips of her fingers soft and dainty.

One of my most important duties is to see that hot water is placed in milady's room every twenty minutes during the day. Never must I fail in this, for milady may enter at any minute and require to wash her hands; if therefore I go out I make sure that someone is there who can take my place in this matter, which I would not dare to neglect.

I do not often see milady before three o'clock, so I have plenty of time to go out to other fashionable houses and see my friends there, who, like myself, are mostly ladies' maids, French or English. We are very particular about our friends, only those who serve the *grandes dames* of Society are permitted to our circle. But we hear all the news, all the events that have happened in other houses.

Ah, we know much, very much!

If some of these lords and ladies, who hardly know we exist, could hear us talking, they would be surprised indeed. Who should know better than we why Lord B. went abroad so suddenly last month, or how much Lady C. is in debt? For an example of this, it was well known in our circle that Sir A. was bankrupt months before the matter became known to his most intimate friends. Other affairs too, affairs of the most private character, are freely discussed amongst us.

At about three o'clock I lay out for milady one of her more elegant and elaborate costumes, in which she is to go to a garden party or fashionable concert or *matinée*. The fatigues of the morning have by this time robbed her of some of the beauties of complexion for which she is so justly famous. So with skilful touches, such as only an artist like myself could administer, I restore to her her natural colour, and she goes out rejoicing in a delicate *teint* which is the admiration of all who see her.

I generally receive those robes that milady wishes to wear no longer.

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Alas! Have I revealed a precious secret of the toilette?

But no, I think not, for milady's name is not known to you, nor is mine—moreover the custom of aiding nature and supplying her defects by means of lotions and powders has become so general that few will find fault with the practice.

When milady has departed in all her elegance to grace some fashionable gathering, I see to her wardrobe and perform a thousand small duties. Very often I have some message to take to the dressmaker, or an appointment to arrange, and once or twice the message has been that "milady will attend in a few days to the communication she received this morning."

I know well that this means that milady's bills have increased to an enormous sum, and that she is being pressed for payment at last. Then I speak in glowing language of milord's generosity, and of his pride in his wife, of how he will deny her nothing, and insists on her being the best-dressed woman in society, whatever extravagance this may lead her into. I speak of his enormous wealth, and how a few thousand pounds are to him a mere nothing, a drop in the ocean, and although milady does not know it, I think these words of mine have often caused her creditors to give her more time, and have enabled her to pay her bills without the inconvenience and unpleasantness of the law-courts.

I do this for my own sake, as much as for my mistress's, for it would be a great blow to my pride if I were to see her in less beautiful, less expensive robes. She is my work of art; I am proud of her, and I always wish to see her shine among the other *grandes dames* as the brightest star of them all.

As a rule I have no more to do after this until the evening, but occasionally milady has a special *tête-à-tête* in the afternoon, and gives up any engagement she may have made for that day, in order to devote herself to the favoured friend. Then I alone must attend them—no other is permitted to intrude on their confidences.

So when milady says to me, "Pauline, I should like you to bring tea to my boudoir this afternoon," I know that orders have been given that her ladyship is "not at home," and that no one will be admitted except the friend who is expected. How quietly I bring in the tea on these occasions! How quickly my duties are completed!

And yet I learn much during the few minutes I spend in the room.

If the visitor is a lady I hear many well-known members of Society discussed, criticised, and pulled to pieces; if the visitor is a gentleman—but no, these are secrets that no lady's-maid would betray to the public.

Before milady returns to robe herself for the evening, I am ready for her, and have made all preparations. Two or three beautiful dresses are laid out ready for her choice, and the lotions and perfumes necessary for the toilette are carefully prepared. Milady is generally in need of a short rest at this hour, and, if time allows, she likes to take once more a scented bath, to cool and refresh her after the hot hours she has spent at crowded receptions.

The *coiffure* for the evening is important, and takes some time, and it is whilst I am doing this that I relate to milady all the news, the gossip, the scandal, which I have heard during the day.

Do not imagine that she questions me on such matters. Oh, no! her ladyship is much too proud to *ask* her maid to tell her these things, but if she is *told* them, then she will listen.

She listens, but the beautiful, haughty face looking at me out of the mirror remains cold and unmoved, as if news of the deepest interest were not being poured into her ears.

Occasionally a faint smile or frown show that some speech of mine has touched her nearly. I am always much interested in these slight changes of expression on milady's face, and my best opportunity for observing them is when I am delicately pencilling her eyebrows, softly shading her lashes, and adding a rose-leaf pink to her clear, pale cheeks, so I reserve my most important items for these moments.

And now there comes for me the most wearisome of all my duties, and that is, the long, long waiting for milady to come home, so that I can attend her, and at last go to bed myself. It is all right at the beginning of the evening in the housekeeper's room, where we can talk and play cards (Monsieur Brown says I am the best bridge player he has ever met).

But when, one by one, my companions leave me, I feel, oh! so lonely and sleepy, and long for the sound of milady's bell to call me to her room.

At last she returns, and I hasten to attend her, and there is much to do. Not only must I brush her hair and arrange it for the night, but I must see that milady has her specially prepared night gloves, and massage

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her face slightly with a certain preparation, before I can think of going wearily—at about four in the morning—to my own rest.

I have given here an account of my chief duties, but a lady's-maid must be ready to do almost anything at a moment's notice, and I am always being called upon for some unaccustomed work.

The other day milady brought to me a young relation of hers, a girl of eighteen, and told me to make her look smart and elegant, like her fashionable friends. My heart sank, for the young lady had lived all her life in the country, her dresses were terrible, and so badly arranged, her hair was not *coiffée* at all, and her hands—heavens! that I should say this of a relation of milady's!—*Her hands had never been manicured!*

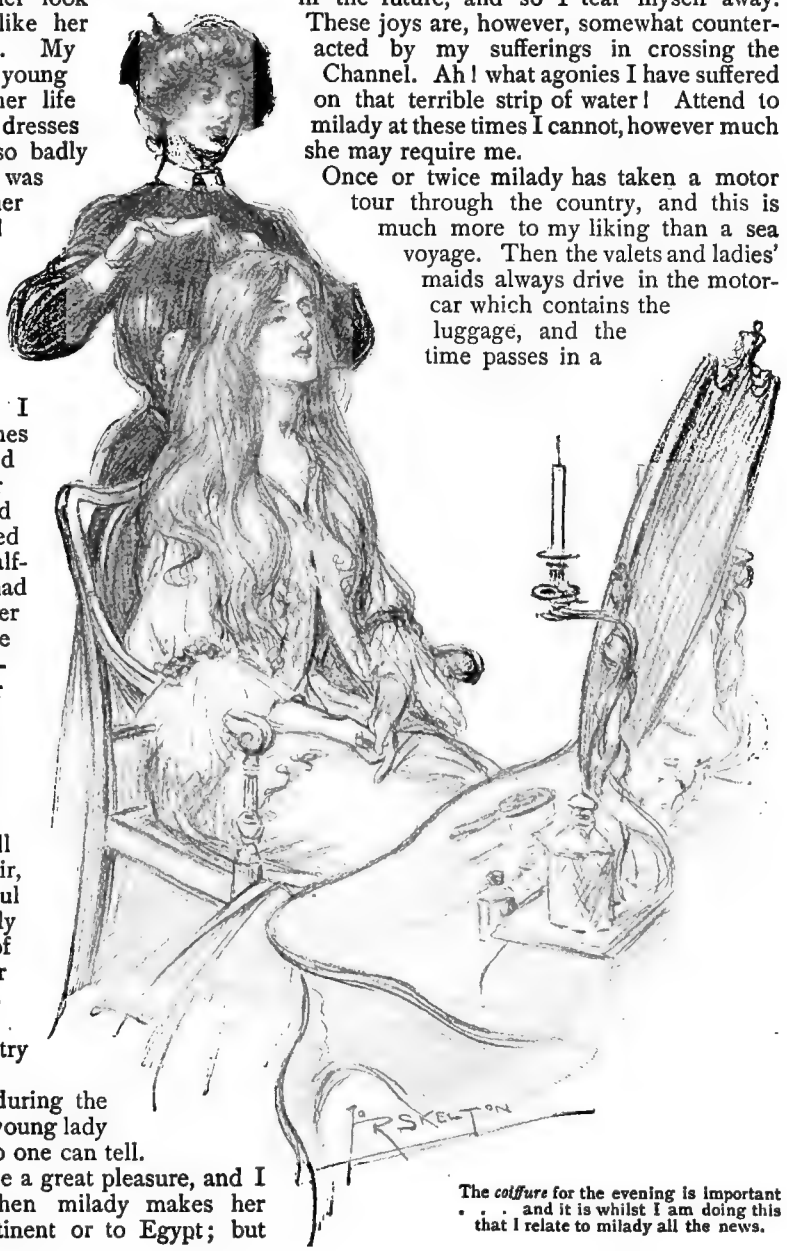
I did my best. I ordered new costumes for her; I arranged most carefully her *coiffure;* I improved her hands and looked to her footwear. Half-an-hour after I had seen her leave her room looking like another girl and almost smart, I met her in the corridor. But—horrors! Her waistband had slipped up, the *chic* little bow I had tied at her throat was all awry, and her hair, unused to such careful dressing, was already untidy, and wisps of it hung round her face; she might as well have been wearing one of her country dresses.

What I suffered during the few weeks that that young lady spent with milady no one can tell.

Travelling is to me a great pleasure, and I am always glad when milady makes her journey on the Continent or to Egypt; but my greatest pleasure of all is when we go to my dear Paris.

What joy to revisit my friends! What rapture to see once more the brilliantly-lighted cafés, and to feel around me the happy, merry life of my gay city! Our stay there seems all too short, and I depart with such regret that more than once I have felt inclined to give up milady and stay behind, but I know that I should regret this still more in the future, and so I tear myself away. These joys are, however, somewhat counteracted by my sufferings in crossing the Channel. Ah! what agonies I have suffered on that terrible strip of water! Attend to milady at these times I cannot, however much she may require me.

Once or twice milady has taken a motor tour through the country, and this is much more to my liking than a sea voyage. Then the valets and ladies' maids always drive in the motor-car which contains the luggage, and the time passes in a



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Visiting at the different country houses is pleasant, too . . . and the party in the housekeeper's room is as gay and lively as one could wish.

manner so agreeable and amusing that we forget to be alarmed at the terrible pace which milord always insists on keeping up, in spite of many fines, which he pays with a light heart. As yet we have had no worse accident than the death of a few dogs, who have been foolish enough to run across our path.

Visiting at the different country houses is pleasant, too, one always meets friends, and the party in the housekeeper's room is as gay and lively as one could wish, You may be sure that by the end of the day of our arrival I know every detail of the wardrobes of the different *grandes dames* who are staying in the house, and can advise milady with good reason as to what robe she should wear in the evening in order to appear to the best advantage, and she knows this well and relies on my judgment.

With my mind on a brilliant orange robe shading to yellow, which I have seen in one of the rooms, I will advise her to choose, instead of the delicate pink which would look pale and sickly beside it, her sapphire blue, in which she has an air so stately and *distinguée*. Or, on the contrary, I suggest a splendid flame coloured robe that will quite eclipse a pale yellow I have seen elsewhere. It is a matter of great pride to me to find that, frequently, when I display milady's wardrobe to other maids, they are obliged to confess that she has more elegant, more numerous, and more expensive robes and more splendid linen than their own mistresses.

Every winter there is a great servants' ball given at milord's country house, to which all our friends in the neighbouring great houses are invited. This is a truly enjoyable night, and many of the dresses would rival those worn in Society, I myself always have one of milady's, which I can make suitable for the occasion.

How I dance! With what energy! For I am a true Parisienne, and I feel the joy of the dance tinkling to my finger tips. The *chef*, too, being of my country, is a fit partner for me, and we make a couple worthy of comment as we glide round the great hall. Milady is always present early in the evening, but she is not one who can readily make herself agreeable to any but her personal friends, she is of the cold and stately type, and so with great good sense she soon leaves us.

Of personal affection I have none for milady, and if I left her I would relate stories of her to my new mistress without regret.

Milady in her turn has not the slightest feeling of personal affection for me. I know my value as one of the cleverest maids in Paris or London, and she knows it, too, and so our relations are amiable.

I have, I hope, now given you a full account of my duties. You will have seen that the life of a lady's-maid in high Society, although a busy one, is not without its pleasures. For myself, I would not exchange it for any other, whatever attractions might be offered to me. Therefore I have refused to assist Monsieur Brown to conduct a public-house in the country, as he kindly suggested to me. The gay life of a lady's maid to be abandoned for that of the wife of an innkeeper!

Quelle idée!

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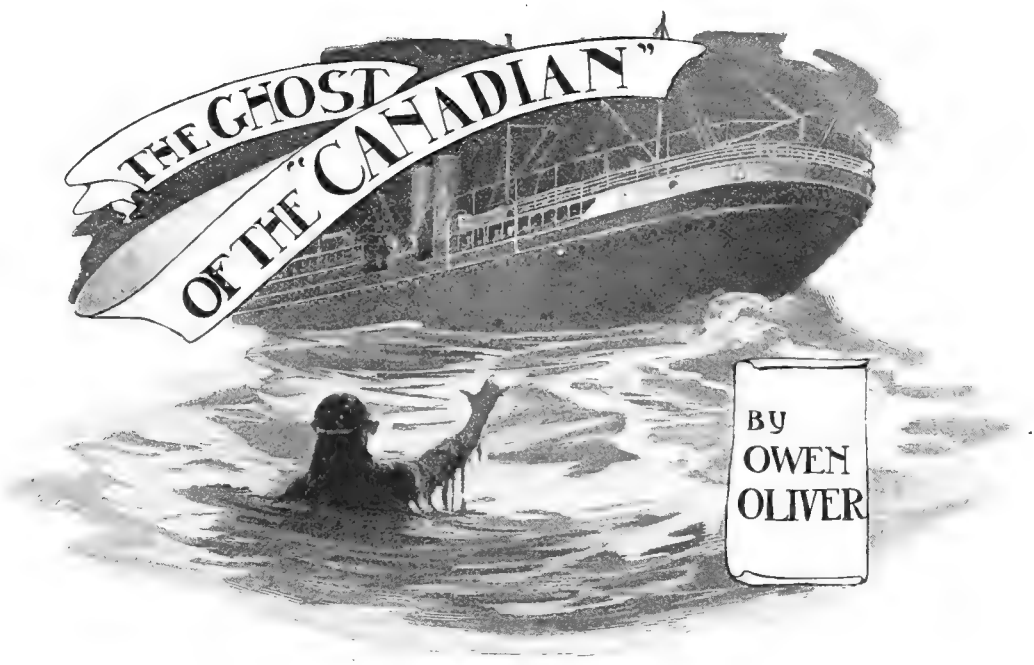

A Strange Story of Love.

THEY remembered afterwards that Mrs. Craig-Myers started the subject; but it was the chief officer who told the story, as they sat in their deck chairs, looking down at the sea. Arthur Bourne was beside Ella Ray, of course. Her arm was on the arm of her chair, and his hand was on her hand. There were only the four of them, and the lights were out. The decks had been chalked for the dancing, and the moonlight was shimmering on the sea, and the waves were swirling by in a medley of green water and white foam. It was nearly half-past eleven, and they had just become the sole occupants of the promenade deck.

"I've never seen the ghost myself," the chief officer stated. "She became a ghost in lat. 13 south, at the spring equinox. She is so unfemininely consistent that she only appears at that time and place. I've never been aboard under those conditions; but several of the crew swear that they've seen her, and old Henderson, the quartermaster, declares that he's heard her four times. He's a Presbyterian, without enough vice to salt him. He wouldn't lie, and he couldn't invent. I don't see how to get over *him*. He was aboard the *Canadian* when it happened. She was called the *Dunloch Castle* then."

"The—*Dunloch—Castle!*" cried Bourne. There were gaps between his words, and he dropped his cigar. They were too busy putting out the sparks to comment upon his excitement. "You don't mean that this ship was the *Dunloch Castle?*"

"She was, wasn't she, Mrs. Craig-Myers?"

"Of course," said that lady carelessly. "Didn't I tell you when we met at the Smythes'?" Bourne shook his head. "I'm sorry if you attach any importance to the matter, especially as I believe I suggested the ship to you."

"It is of no importance," Bourne shivered. "It is quite cool to-night."

"Cool!" cried the chief officer. "Nonsense! You must have a chill. You'd better take some quinine. Where was I? Oh, the name! They altered it at the time of the Union-Castle amalgamation. She didn't fill up well, and I suppose they thought it was on account of the ghost. Some people are superstitious about such things. I don't know what made me mention it. We don't want the story to get about on board."

He lit a fresh cigarette from the old one, and paused doubtfully.

"We won't repeat it," Mrs. Craig-Myers promised. "You must tell us, now you've excited our curiosity."

"Yes, you must," Miss Ray insisted.

Bourne said nothing.

The chief officer altered a cushion, and

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leaned back, with his feet on a rail. He was a discreet man, but he loved telling a story.

"There were the usual elements of a 'board-ship romance,'" he began, "a man and a woman; too little to do; too much sea; too much moonlight; two chairs beyond the wind screen; two people in them; no chief officer and Mrs. Craig-Myers to chaperon them."

He nodded playfully at Bourne and Miss Ray, and she looked up and laughed, with the starlight sparkling in her big brown eyes. She was a frank, clean-minded English girl, and her laugh was good to hear. She had accepted Bourne on board, and was very much in love with him, and did not care who knew.

"Having no one to look after them, they went a little too fast, and a little too far. People *do* get on quickly at sea, don't they? I suppose it's the moon. Anyway, they were desperately in love before reaching Madeira. After Madeira they were inseparable till—lat. 13 south."

"And then?"

"It is supposed that she found out that he was already engaged—or married, for all I know. That is one of the sea-risks not insured at Lloyds'."

"Don't joke about it," Ella Ray entreated. "It was very sad for her if she really loved him."

The chief officer nodded.

"There is no doubt that she was in love with him. For the matter of that, I believe he was in love with her. All the same, they quarrelled—just where we are sitting now, at about this time of night. Henderson and the deck steward saw them. She cried, and held his arm, and pleaded with him as if she wanted him to stay, but he pushed her away and went below. He seems to have been rather a brute."

Bourne leaned forward suddenly, clutching the arm of his chair.

"You have no right to say that," he protested. "You don't know what passed between them."

"I know what generally *does* pass," said the chief officer. "Anyway, he went below, and she stayed here looking at the water. It's a foolish thing to look too long at the water, especially at night. It hypnotises you. The sea and the sky seem so big, and you and the world so little. You think how cool it is in the water, and picture yourself in it, as if you were someone else, and wonder what drowning would be like, if you *did* fall over. I don't suppose she really meant to do it, but—" (he waved his hand at the water) "she went over just here, in front of Mr. Bourne's chair."

"Oh—h!" Ella Ray gave a shivering cry, and clutched her lover's arm. She felt, without thinking so definitely, that his arm was nerveless and unresponsive. "Poor, poor girl!"

"Poor heart-broken girl!" said Mrs. Craig-Myers.

"Poor girl!" echoed the chief officer. "Do you know, I pity the fellow, too, rather. I don't suppose he meant any harm. Just flirted a little—and drifted—and then——! Fancy having a thing like that on your mind all your life."

"He wouldn't have had it on his mind long if it had really troubled him," said Mrs. Craig-Myers bitterly. "If he was a *man*, there was only one thing that he could do."

"He tried to jump over when he heard of it. They had to watch him all the way to Cape Town. I don't know what became of him afterwards. The sailors declare that some day he'll be aboard again when the ship makes 13 south at the spring equinox, as she does to-night, and jump over to her; and that she will 'walk' till he does. Perhaps he's a passenger now, unknown to us."

"Don't!" cried Ella Ray. "Don't! It would serve him right, of course, but——" she shuddered. "Isn't it awful, Arthur?"

"Awful!" he agreed slowly. "Awful! Of course it's only a sailor's story—about the ghost."

The chief officer rose and yawned.

"I don't know," he said. "I've lived too long to disbelieve anything, and Henderson is an accurate man. However, my going to sleep is a certainty, and seeing the ghost is only a speculation. Shall I carry your cushions down for you, Mrs. Craig-Myers?"

"You haven't told us what she is like, or what she does," Ella Ray observed.

"She was a tall, dark, handsome girl, half Irish, half Spanish, according to Henderson, who, by the way, is inclined to stick up for the fellow. Her name was Desmond. She comes out of nowhere in particular, and stands by the rail wringing her hands. Then suddenly she screams, 'Arthur! Arthur.' His name was Arthur Graham."

"Stop, stop!" cried Bourne. "I—I beg your pardon. It's horrible—horrible!"

"Then she jumps up on the rail and goes over, screaming his name as she falls, and she keeps on calling from the water. Henderson

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says that he's never caught sight of her himself, only heard her voice; but some of the hands declare that they've seen her quite plainly. It's all nonsense, of course."

"I don't call it nonsense at all," said Mrs. Craig-Myers quickly. "Of course she would haunt him if she could. *I* would—you see *I* have Spanish blood in me—Look!" She waved her hand at the water. "I can almost see her now. Just at the edge of the foam, beyond the light—looking up here as if she saw someone—holding out her hands—calling ——"

Bourne sprang up, and Ella Ray caught at his arm.

"Stop!" he cried hoarsely. "Stop!"

"Stop!" cried Ella. "*Please!*"

"Her eyes are fixed on someone. She——"

"Come, come, Mrs. Craig-Myers," the chief officer interposed. "You mustn't excite yourself. I wouldn't have told the story if I had thought you would take it so much to heart. It is distressing; but it's all over now. Remember, it happened ten years ago."

She turned on him with her eyes flashing.

"Do you think no one can remember for ten years? A mother? A sister? It is only men who forget. But he will not always be able to forget. He will stand here some night—perhaps to-night. He will hear her calling; and then ——"

Her voice ended almost in a snarl. Then she laughed harshly.

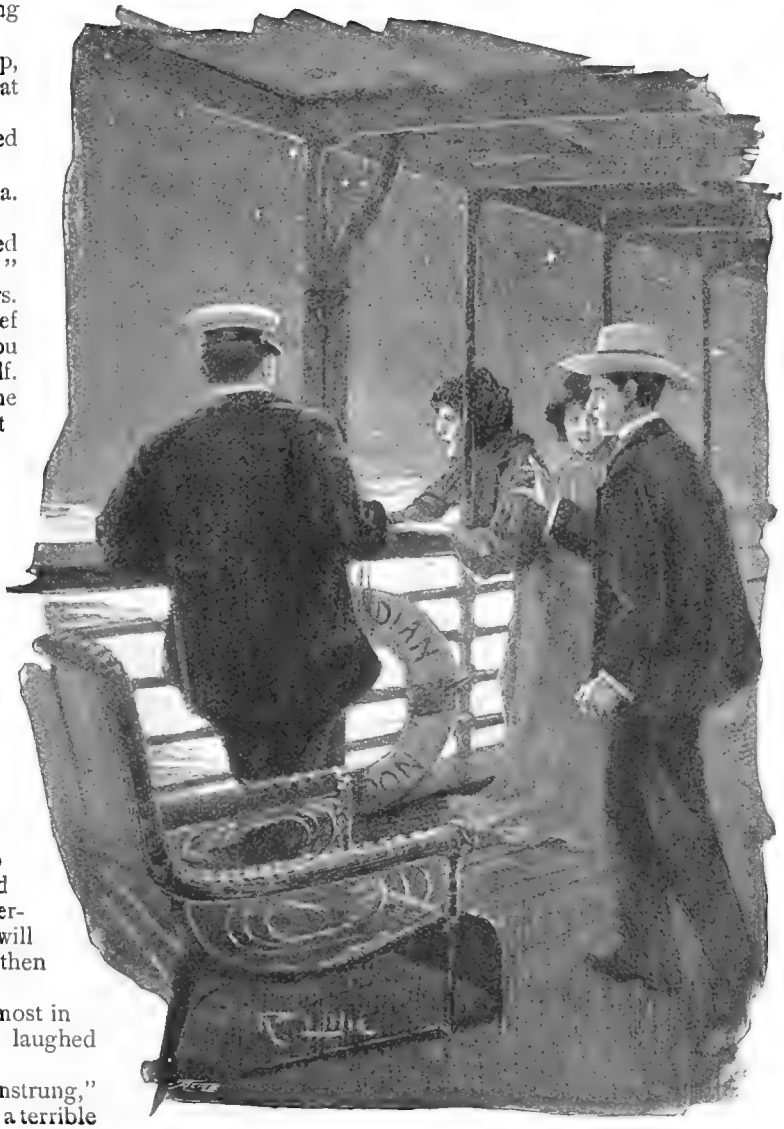
"My nerves are unstrung," she apologised. "It is a terrible story, and it seemed so real to me, here in the very place. She appears about twelve to-night, I think you said?"

"I don't know that I said so, but that is the time."

"Ah! well, it's too late for ladies. You can stop and see her, Mr. Bourne. Wouldn't you like to see the pretty ghost, with her lovely dark eyes, and her nice voice?"

Bourne turned away suddenly.

"I don't think it is a subject to jest about, Mrs. Craig-Myers," said Ella firmly.



"Look! . . . . I can almost see her now. Just at the edge of the foam, beyond the light."

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"No," said Mrs. Craig-Myers, "I don't think it is a jest. I don't think it will end in a jest. Some day the man will hear her, and——Well, good-night, my dears. Don't *you* quarrel, and jump overboard."

Then she swept away, with the chief officer carrying her cushions, and Ella put her cheek softly against her lover's shoulder. His chin was on his hand, and he was staring at the sea. He did not even offer to kiss her.

"Arthur," she said softly.

He did not answer.

"Arthur?" She touched his hair, but he did not move.

Suddenly she took his face in her hands, and turned it round, so that the dim starlight fell upon it.

His teeth were set, and his breath came in jerks. His face was white, and his eyes stared wildly. "Arthur! you don't mean—Arthur!"

"I—was—the—man," he said, in a dull, far off voice. "I never thought that she would do it. If you knew everything! But I can't tell you about it—she is dead, and—I can't." His voice stopped, and he buried his face in his hands again.

She caught at the rail, and stared blankly at him.

"But—but—your name isn't Graham?"

"It was. I changed it."

"You—you killed her!" she gasped. "I—wish it would kill me, too. No, don't touch me, *I* shall not jump over. I am not that sort. You have broken my heart, I think."

She gave a queer little choking cry, and he put out his arm. She pushed it back, and staggered away, and he stood staring at the water. Swish—swish—swish! White foam spreading out over the green. The glint of the stars among the green and white. Swish—swish—swish! The voice of the waters saying what no man knows; the silence of the stars saying what no man knows either.

And under the shadow of the ship's side the dark.

His hands grasped the rail tighter and tighter as he looked down. Ella Ray paused at the saloon companion and saw him looking, and came to a stand. The white-haired quartermaster stepped softly from the shadow and touched her arm.

"You know?" he asked excitedly. "You know? I caught a word of what he said."

"Oh!" she sobbed tearlessly, "I know. What *shall* I do?"

"Go back to him," the old quartermaster said. "Go back to him. There is only the love of you 'twixt him and death. She will be calling to him to-night."

"He is hers," she said passionately. The old man shook his head. "He killed her!" He laid his hand softly on her shoulder.

"Dear lassie," he said, "no. The fault that parted them was hers, and he was a man and kept her secret. I watched over him when we feared that he would kill himself; and he told me the story under the pledge of secrecy. I cannot break my oath and tell you, but it was a terrible crime in her past that he had discovered—something that made it impossible for him to marry her. Murder runs in the family, and—there, there, I am saying too much. Go to him now, if you love him."

"Oh, I do! He is leaning over." She took a quick step forward, but the quartermaster caught her by the arm.

"Go gently," he whispered, "if you startle him he'll jump over. Good heavens!"

A soft, wailing cry rang up from the depths of the sea.

"Arthur! Arthur!"

Bourne put one foot slowly on the lower rail.

"Arthur!" called the voice again.

He stiffened himself as if to spring, then Ella found her voice.

"Arthur!" she called. "Come to *me*, Arthur."

He relaxed his muscles, and looked round, but did not seem to see them.

"Creep to him softly, so as not to startle him," the quartermaster whispered, and she went on tip-toe with her arms held out.

"Arthur!" the voice that seemed to come from the sea called again. "Dear Arthur! Remember me, who loved you."

He raised himself again; the second foot left the ground.

"Arthur!" Ella called. "Dear, dear Arthur. I am Ella, your Ella."

He hesitated, and she began running towards him. The voice called again. He swayed a little forward—a little further—put one knee on the top rail—swayed over—but Ella's strong young arms were round him, and the quartermaster's were round her, and between them they pulled him back, and led him towards the saloon companion.

His eyes were staring blindly, as if he was in a trance, till they rested on Ella's face, then they suddenly lit up.

"Why!" he said. "It is *you* dear! I think I was walking in a dream, or—what was it?"

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"Yes, yes," she said softly, "you were walking in a dream, and in the dream you loved me, and I loved you."

She threw her wrap round his head to shut out the voice, and put her arm through his. As they passed through the companion, the voice called again. The quartermaster looked over the side of the ship curiously. The moon was shining on the long row of port-holes, and at one of them he saw a frenzied upturned face — the face of Mrs. Craig-Myers! As he watched her she called again, "Arthur! Arthur!"

The Captain had an interview with her the next morning, and she kept to her cabin for the rest of the voyage. He did not want a further scandal about the ship, and ordered the quartermaster to keep silence; but, when Arthur Bourne and Ella Ray had landed at Capetown, the old man obtained permission to relieve their minds in regard to the ghost.

"Arthur!" the voice that seemed to come from the sea called again. "Dear Arthur!"

"Mrs. Craig-Myers was Miss Desmond's sister," he explained, addressing himself to Ella Ray. "Whatever their faults and crimes—and, I fear, they were heavy—they were greatly attached to one another. When she heard of her sister's death, she vowed vengeance on Mr. Graham—Mr. Bourne as he called himself afterwards. At first she failed to trace him, so she travelled several times by the ship, taking the main-deck cabin underneath the place where it happened, so that she could call out of the port-hole, and set about the ghost story. She seems to have had an idea that this would help to discover him, or bring him to the ship. As it did not, she made further efforts till she tracked him. Through her influence with business friends, he was offered the appointment which brought him out now. She managed to make his acquaintance and to persuade him to travel by this ship. She led the chief officer on to tell the story at the right moment; and when she had worked upon Mr. Bourne's feelings until he was in such a state that he was ready to fancy that he saw the ghost, she went down below and called out of the cabin window."

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MR. —HIS PAGES.

Christmas again! and "Mr. X" with a wider, jollier set of friends than ever! Well, here is his very best greeting to each single one of them. May they have the most **X***ceptionally* **X***cellent* **X***mas they ever* **X***perienced, with all the usual accompaniments—Roast Beef, Turkeys, Plum Puddings,* Chestnuts, *Crackers, and Laughter galore.*

Puzzle Penknives or Puzzle Purses will be given as prizes to readers who forward *new* puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X." and wishing for a reply, should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE), 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

MR. "X's" MONTHLY PRIZE.

No. 7.

[Answers must be sent in before January 20th, addressed "Mr. X," care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, Henrietta Street, W.C., and marked on the outside, "No. 7."]

No real, old-fashioned Christmas dinner concludes without a drinking of healths—why not prepare a capital little toast of your own, with which at once to please your family and perhaps win five shillings? "Mr. X" this month offers a prize of five shillings to the sender of what is, in his opinion, the best toast—either a short verse, or a short, smart sentence. It need not necessarily be original. Here, for example, is a good old Derbyshire toast:

Here's to thee, and me, and all of us;
May we ne'er need nowt, noan on us;
Neither thee, nor me, nor anybody else,
All on us, noan on us.

SIMPLE DEDUCTION.

JOHN: "If I prove to you that that penny of yours is a shilling, will you give it to me?"

ALPHONSO: "Yes."

JOHN: "Right. Now, follow carefully. A penny is a copper." "Yes." "A copper is a policeman." "Yes." "A policeman is a bobby." "Yes." "A bobby is a bob." "Ye-es." "And a bob is a shilling. Thanks."

Q. Why is a new play like a cigar?
A. Because if it is bad it won't draw, no matter how you "puff" it, and if it is good everyone wants a box.

A WEAKLY WEEK.

JAMES: "Do you know why Sunday is the strongest day in the week?"

JONES: "No. Why?"

JAMES: "Because all the others are week days."

TRY IT ON A FRIEND.

Offer someone a box of matches, saying: "Here's a curious thing you probably did not know before. If you light a match and blow it out *immediately* you can strike it again."

Your friend, accepting your word, will try, but, of course, the match will not relight. Make him try again and again till at last he gives it up in disgust, saying that he is convinced it will not light again.

You then say in a tone of surprise: "Light again! of course not. I said you can *strike* it again, not *light* it."

Q. What made the cake-walk?
A. Seeing the biscuit-box.

STICK TO THE TRUTH.

JOHNSON (who has seen Samson pick up a penny): "Here, that's mine."

SAMSON: "Why, has yours got a hole in it?"

JOHNSON: "Yes!"

SAMSON (triumphantly): "Well, this hasn't." (Walks off chuckling.)

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A Paradox.

Now here's a puzzling paradox
Of which I've oft heard spoken;
A valued thing you have to break
Before it's yours unbroken.

Answer: A record.

The Lightning Calculator.

Here is a method of proving yourself a veritable magician with figures. A friend gives you a number of seven figures; to this he may add any other three numbers of seven figures, and you will add three seven-figure numbers also; yet immediately he has told you his first number you can tell him what the total of all seven added together will be! It adds to the mystery to write this total down on a piece of paper, fold it, and tell your friend to look at it when the other numbers have been given and he has found the total.

The rules are simple: From the last figure of the number he gives you subtract 3, and place 3 before the whole number. That will be the answer.

Thus: "9672015," says he, and immediately you write down the total as 39672012.

But now about the remaining six numbers. Well, the rules are simply these: (1) That you supply the numbers in turn, your friend starting. (2) That each number you give him is arrived at by subtracting his latest number from seven nines (9999999). (3) That his third and fourth numbers must be less than his second (but must contain seven figures).

For example: 9672015 is his first number, and 39672012 your total.

Very well	9672015
Now he gives his second number, say	8543210
You, subtracting this from seven nines, give	1456789
His third number, say	6231008
Your second number.....	3768991
His fourth number, say	5318270
Your third number.....	4681729
Total, just as you have written on the folded paper	39672012

Expensive.

Smith: "Now, Mr. Smart, have you heard about herrings being a shilling each?"

Smart: "No."

Smith: "Dear, dear!"

MR. X's MONTHLY PRIZE.—No. 4.

RESULT.

Descriptions of "The Courtship and Wedding of Miss Rose Bush and Mr. Bill Berry" (Bilberry) given in a series of questions, the answers to which had to be made out of the names of fruits, flowers, and plants came to "Mr. X" in huge numbers—and nine out of every ten sent in were from ladies. Evidently courtship and marriage has a more absorbing interest for ladies than for men. The prize of Five Shillings goes to a contributor who sent a list containing no fewer than 277 different names of plants, but omitted to send her name and address; will she please do so? "Mr. X" was on the look out for quality rather than quantity, but was able to award the prize to this list on both counts. Puzzle penknives or puzzle-purses are awarded to Miss M. A. H. Page, 65 Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill, W., and to Miss Shapter, The White House, Marlborough. A few extracts are given:—

Which sister did Mr. Bill Berry propose to?
The *Elder*.
What, in reply, did she ask for?
Thyme.
What did he gain when she said "Yes"?
Heartsease.
What did he say she would never do?
Rue it.
What did she think Berry?
Sloe but *Sage*.
What was the prospective father-in-law's first question to Mr. Berry?
"*Anemone?*" (Any money?)
What part did her little brother play during the courtship?
Gooseberry.
And what did Berry think him?
A little *Medlar* who loved to *Nettle* him.
Rose asked Berry what kind of love his was. What did he reply?
"An *Everlasting*; not a *Lad's Love*."
"Is it really deep?" she asked. And what did he reply?
"You cannot *Plum* its depths."
Had Berry a rival?
Yes, Sir *Valerian* (Val Erian), of London.
What did he hiss in Berry's ear?
"*Ivy* (I vie), Berry, with you; and I will *Whin* her yet."
State Berry's rejoinder.
"I will *Beet* you and trample on your *London Pride*, you *Cockscomb*."
Who were the distinguished guests at the wedding?
Lords and Ladies.
Any undesirable guest?
Yes, *Ragged Robin*.
Who was the best man?
William Allen Richardson.
What did the chief bridesmaid inwardly think him?
Sweet William.
What saw the bride through her veil?
Love-in-a-mist.
What felt the bridegroom on finding he had forgotten the ring?
Orchid.
What said the bride to him immediately the ceremony was over?
Kiss-me-quick.
And where did he kiss her?
On her *Tulips*.
Who drew up the marriage settlement?
Jonquil. (John Quill.)
A shower of rain damped the clothes of the wedding party. What had they to do to their clothes?
Arum. (Air 'em.)

OTHER RESULTS.

Five Odd Numbers Wanted (p. 26): 16, 1, 1, 1, 1. "But 16 is not an odd number!" "No, but it is a very odd number of horses to go into one stable."

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THE OLD MAN IN THE CORNER

X.—THE AYRSHAM MYSTERY.

By The Baroness Orczy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Old Man in the Corner	Who relates the story to—	Sir John Fernhead	Squire of Fernhead.
The Lady Journalist ...	Who re-tells it to the Royal readers.	Lord Walterton	A small arms manufacturer.
Mat Newton	A small shopkeeper.	Mervin Ledbury...	His brother.
Mary Newton	His daughter.	Michael Pitkin	A publican.
Samuel Holder	A carpenter.	Edward Sanders	A butler.

I.

"I have never had a great opinion of our detective force here in England," said the man in the corner, in his funny, gentle, apologetic manner, "but the way that department mismanaged the affair at Ayrsham simply passes comprehension."

"Indeed?" I said with all the quiet dignity I could command. "It is a pity they did not consult you in the matter, wasn't it?"

"It is a pity," he retorted with aggravating meekness, "that they do not use a little common sense. The case resembles that of Columbus' egg, and is every bit as simple.

"It was one evening last October, wasn't it? that two labourers walking home from Ayrsham village, turned down a lane, which it appears is a short cut to the block of cottages some distance off, where they lodged.

"The night was very dark, and there was a nasty drizzle in the air. In the picturesque vernacular of the two labourers, 'You couldn't see your 'and before your eyes.' Suddenly they stumbled over the body of a man lying right across the path.

"'At first we thought 'e was drunk,' explained one of them subsequently, 'but when we took a look at 'im, we soon saw there was something very wrong. Me and my mate turned 'im over, and "foul play" we both says at once. Then we see that it was old man Newton. Poor chap, 'e was dead and no mistake.'

"Old man Newton, as he was universally called by his large circle of acquaintances, was very well known throughout the entire neighbourhood, most particularly at every inn and public bar for some miles round.

"He also kept a local sweet-stuff shop at

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Ayrsham. No wonder that the men were horrified at finding him in such a terrible condition; even in their uneducated minds there could be no doubt that the old man had been murdered, for his skull had been literally shattered by a fearful blow, dealt him from behind by some powerful assailant.

"Whilst the labourers were cogitating as to what they had better do next, they heard footsteps also turning into the lane, and the next moment Samuel Holder, a well-known inhabitant of Ayrsham, arrived upon the scene.

"'Hello! is that you, Mat Newton?' shouted Samuel as he came near.

"'Aye! 'tis old man Newton, right enough,' replied one of the labourers, 'but 'e won't answer you no more.'

"Samuel Holder seemed absolutely horrified when he saw the body of old man Newton, he uttered various ejaculations, which the two labourers, however, did not take special notice of at the time.

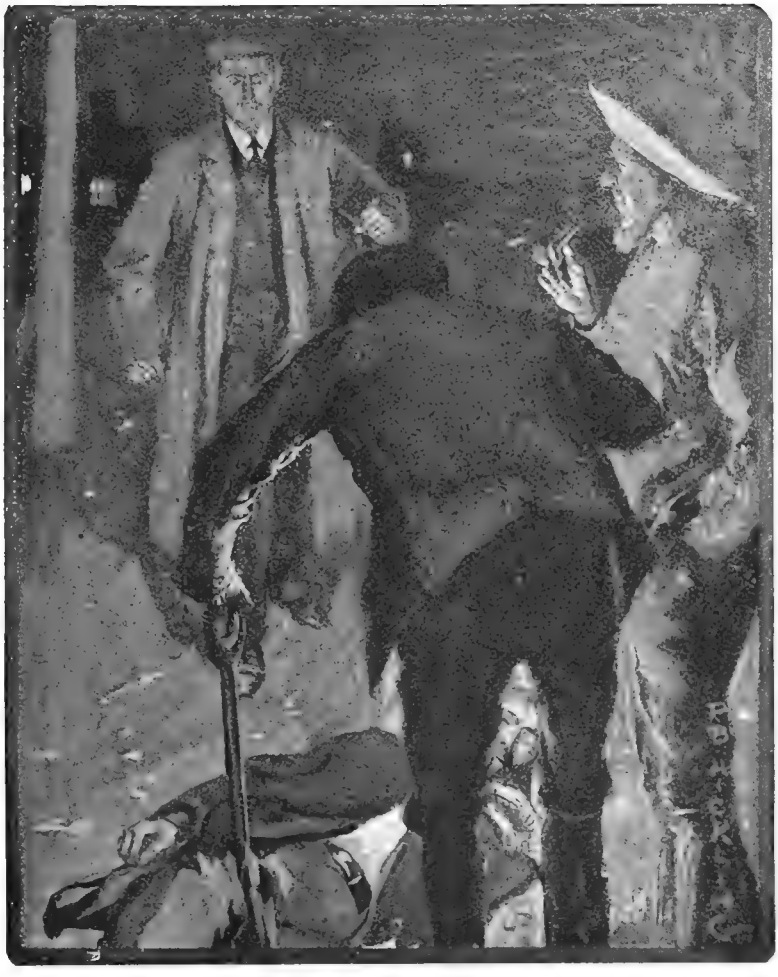
"Then the three men held a brief consultation together, with the result that one of them ran back to Ayrsham village to fetch the local police, whilst the two others remained in the lane to guard the body.

"The mystery—for it seemed one from the first—created a great deal of sensation in Ayrsham and all round the neighbourhood, and much sympathy was felt for and shown to Mary Newton, the murdered man's only child, a young girl about two or three and twenty, who, moreover, was in ill health.

"True, old man Newton was not a satisfactory protector for a young girl. He was very much addicted to drink; he neglected the little bit of local business he had; and, moreover, had recently shamefully ill-treated his daughter, the neighbours testifying to the many and loud quarrels that occurred in the small back parlour behind the sweet-stuff shop.

"A case of murder—the moment an element of mystery hovers around it—immediately excites the attention of the newspaper-reading public, who is always seeking for new sensations.

"Very soon the history of old man Newton and of his daughter found its way into the London and provincial dailies, and the Ayrsham murder became a topic of all-absorbing interest.



"The next moment Samuel Holder, a well-known inhabitant of Ayrsham, arrived upon the scene."

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"It appears that old man Newton was at one time a highly respectable local tradesman, always in a very small way, as there is not much business doing at Ayrsham. It is a poor and straggling village, although its railway station is an important junction on the Midland system.

"There is some very good shooting in the neighbourhood, and about four or five years ago some of it, together with 'The Limes,' a pretty house just outside the village, was rented for the autumn by Mr. Ledbury and his brother.

"You know the firm of Ledbury and Co., do you not—the great small arms manufacturers? The elder Mr. Ledbury was the recipient of Birthday honours last year, and is the present Lord Walterton, his younger brother Mervin was in those days, and is still, a handsome young fellow in the Hussars.

"At the time—I mean about five years ago—Mary Newton was the local beauty of Ayrsham; she did a little dressmaking in her odd moments, but it appears that she spent most of her time in flirting. She was nominally engaged to be married to Samuel Holder, a young carpenter, but there was a good deal of scandal talked about her, for she was thought to be very fast; village gossip coupled her name with that of several young men in the neighbourhood, who were known to have paid the village beauty marked attention, and among these admirers of Mary Newton during the autumn of which I am speaking, young Mr. Mervin Ledbury figured conspicuously.

"Be that as it may, certain it is that Mary Newton had a very bad reputation among the scandalmongers of Ayrsham, and though everybody was shocked, no one was astonished when one fine day in the winter following she suddenly left her father and her home, and went no one knew whither. She left, it appears, a very pathetic letter behind, begging for her father's forgiveness, and that of Samuel Holder whom she was jilting, but she was going to marry a gentleman above them all in station, and was going to be a real lady; then only would she return home.

"A very usual village tragedy, as you see. Four years went by, and Mary Newton did not return home. As time went by and with it no news of his daughter, old man Newton took her disappearance very much to heart. He began to neglect his business, and then his house, which became dirty and ill-kept by an occasional charwoman who would do a bit of promiscuous tidying for him from time to time. He was ill-tempered, sullen, and morose, and very soon became hopelessly addicted to drink.

"Then, suddenly, as unexpectedly as she had gone, Mary Newton returned to her home one fine day, after an absence of four years. What had become of her in the interim no one in the village ever knew, she was generally supposed to have earned a living by dressmaking, until her failing health had driven her well-nigh to starvation, and then back to the home and her father she had so heedlessly left.

"Needless to say that all talk of her 'marriage with a gentleman above her in station' was entirely at an end. As for old man Newton, he seems after his daughter's return to have become more sullen and morose than ever, and the neighbours now busied themselves with talk of the fearful rows which frequently occurred in the back parlour of the little sweet-stuff shop.

"Father and daughter seemed to be leading a veritable cat and dog life together. Old man Newton was hardly ever sober, and at the village inns he threw out weird and strange hints about 'breach of promise actions with £5000 damages, which his daughter should get, if only he knew where to lay hands upon the scoundrel.'

"He also made vague and wholly useless inquiries about young Mervin Ledbury, but in a sleepy out-of-the-way village like Ayrsham, no one knows anything about what goes on beyond a narrow five-mile radius at most. 'The Limes' and the shooting were let to different tenants year after year, and neither Lord Walterton nor Mr. Mervin Ledbury had ever rented them again."

II.

"That was the past history of old Newton," continued the man in the corner after a brief pause, "that is to say, of the man who on a dark night last October was found murdered in a lonely lane, not far from Ayrsham. The public, as you may well imagine, took a very keen interest in the case from the outset: the story of Mary Newton, of the threatened breach of promise, of the £5000 damages, roused masses of conjecture to which no one as yet dared to give definite shape.

"One name, however, had already been whispered significantly, that of Mr. Mervin Ledbury, the young Hussar, one of Mary Newton's admirers at the very time she left home in order, as she said, to be married to someone above her in station.

"Many thinking people too wanted to know what Samuel Holder, Mary's jilted

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fiancé, was doing close to the scene of the murder that night, and how he came to make the remark: 'Hello! is that you, Mat Newton?' when the old man lived nearly half-a-mile away, and really had no cause for being in that particular lane, at that hour of the night in the drizzling rain.

"The inquest, which for want of other accommodation, was held at the local police-station, was, as you may imagine, very largely attended.

"I had read a brief statement of the case in the London papers, and had hurried down to Ayrsham Junction, as I scented a mystery, and knew I should enjoy myself.

"When I got there, the room was already packed, and the medical evidence was being gone through.

"Old man Newton, it appears, had been knocked on the head by a heavily-leaded cane, which was found in the ditch close to the murdered man's body.

"The cane was produced in court; it was as stout as an old fashioned club, and of terrific weight. The man who wielded it must have been very powerful, for he had only dealt one blow, but that blow had cracked the old man's skull. The cane was undoubtedly of foreign make, for it had a solid silver ferrule at one end, which was not English hall-marked.

"In the opinion of the medical expert, death was the result of the blow, and must have been almost instantaneous.

"The labourers who first came across the body of the murdered man then repeated their story; they had nothing new to add, and their evidence was of no importance. But after that there was some stir in the court. Samuel Holder had been called and sworn to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

"He was a youngish, heavily-built man of about five and thirty, with a nervous, not altogether prepossessing expression of face. Pressed by the coroner, he gave us a few details of old man Newton's earlier history, such as I have already told you.

"'Old Mat,' he explained with some hesitation, 'was for ever wanting to find out who the gentleman was who had promised marriage to Mary four years ago. But Mary was that obstinate, and wouldn't tell him, and this exasperated the old man terribly, so that they had many rows on the subject.'

"'I suppose,' said the coroner tentatively, 'that you never knew who that gentleman was?'

"Samuel Holder seemed to hesitate for a moment. His manner became even more nervous than before; he shifted his position from one foot to the other; finally he said:

"'I don't know as I ought to say, but——'

"'I am quite sure that you must tell us everything you know which might throw light upon this extraordinary and terrible murder,' retorted the coroner sternly.

"'Well,' replied Samuel Holder, whilst great beads of perspiration stood out upon his forehead, 'Mary never would give up the letters she had had from him, and she would not hear anything about a breach of promise case and £5000 damages; but old Mat 'e often says to me, says 'e, "It's young Mr. Ledbury," 'e says, "she's told me that once. I got it out of 'er, and if I only knew where to find 'im——"'

"'You are quite sure of this?' asked the coroner, for Holder had paused and seemed quite horrified at the enormity of what he had said.

"'Yes — yes — your worship — your honour—,' stammered Holder. ''E's told me 'twas young Mr. Ledbury times out of count, and——'

"But Samuel Holder here completely broke down; he seemed unable to speak, his lips twitched convulsively, and the coroner, fearing that the man would faint, had him conveyed into the next room to recover himself, whilst another witness was brought forward.

"This was Michael Pitkin, landlord of the Fernhead Arms, at Ayrsham, who had been on very intimate terms with old Newton during the four years which elapsed after Mary's disappearance. He had a very curious story to tell, which aroused public excitement to its highest pitch.

"It appears that to him also the old man had often confided the fact that it was Mr. Ledbury who had promised to marry Mary, and then had shamefully left her stranded and moneyless in London.

"'But of course,' added the jovial and pleasant-looking landlord of the Fernhead Arms, 'the likes of us down here didn't know what became of Mr. Ledbury after he left "The Limes," until one day I reads in the local paper that Sir John Fernhead's daughter is going to be married to Captain Mervin Ledbury. Of course, your honour, and me, and all of us know Sir John, our squire, down at Fernhead Towers, and I says to old Mat: "It strikes me," I says, "that you've got your man." Sure enough it was the same Mr. Ledbury who rented "The Limes" years ago, who was

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engaged to the young lady up at The Towers, and last week there was grand doings there—lords and ladies and lots of quality staying there, and also the captain.'

"'Well?' asked the coroner eagerly, whilst everyone held their breath, wondering what was to come.

"'Well,' continued Michael Pitkin, 'old man Newton went down to The Towers one day. 'E was determined to see young Mr. Ledbury, and went. What 'appened I don't know, for old Mat wouldn't tell me, but 'e came back mighty furious from 'is visit, and swore 'e would ruin the young man and make no end of a scandal, and he would bring the law agin' 'im and get £5000 damages.'

"This story, embellished, of course, by many details, was the gist of what the worthy landlord of the Fernhead Arms had to say, but you may imagine how everyone's excitement and curiosity was aroused; in the meanwhile Samuel Holder was getting over his nervousness, and was more ready to give a clear account of what happened on the fatal night itself.

"'It was about nine o'clock,' he explained in answer to the coroner, 'and I was hurrying back to Ayrsham, through the fields; it was dark and raining, and I was about to strike across the hedge into the lane when I heard voices—a woman's, then a man's. Of course, I could see nothing, and the man spoke in a whisper, but I had recognised Mary's voice quite plainly. She kept on saying: "'Tisn't my fault!" she says, "it's father's, 'e 'as made up 'is mind. I held out as long as I could, but 'e worried me, and now 'e's got your letters, and it's too late."'

"Samuel Holder again paused a moment, then continued:

"'They talked together for a long time: Mary seemed very upset and the man very angry. Presently 'e says to 'er: "Well, tell your father to come out here and speak to me for a moment. I'll see what I can do." Mary seemed to 'esitate for a time, then she went away, and the man waited there in the drizzling rain, with me the other side of the 'edge watchin' 'im. I waited for a long time, for I wanted to know what was goin' to 'appen; then time went on. I thought perhaps that old Mat was at the Fernhead Arms, and that Mary couldn't find 'im, so I went back to Ayrsham by the fields, 'oping to find the old man. The stranger didn't budge. 'E seemed inclined to wait—so I left 'im there—and—and—that's all. I went to the Fernhead Arms, saw old Mat wasn't there—then I went back to the lane—and—old man Newton was dead, and the stranger was gone.'

"There was a moment or two of dead silence in the court when Samuel Holder had given his evidence, then the coroner asked quietly:

"'You do not know who the stranger was?'

"'Well, I couldn't be sure, your honour,' replied Samuel nervously, 'it was pitch dark. I wouldn't like to swear a fellow creature's life and character away.'

"'No, no, quite so,' rejoined the coroner, 'but do you happen to know what time it was when all this occurred?'

"'Oh yes, your honour,' said Samuel decisively, 'as I walked away from the Fernhead Arms I 'eard Ayrsham church clock strike ten o'clock.'

"'Ah! that's always something,' said the coroner, with a sigh of satisfaction. 'Call Mary Newton, please.'"

III.

"You may imagine," continued the man in the corner after a slight pause, "with what palpitating interest we all watched the pathetic little figure, clad in deep black, who now stepped forward to give evidence.

"It was difficult to imagine that Mary Newton could ever have been pretty; trouble had obviously wrought havoc with her good looks. She was now a wizened little thing, with dark rings under her eyes, and a pale anæmic complexion. She stood perfectly listlessly before the coroner, waiting to be questioned ,but otherwise not seeming to take the slightest interest in the proceedings. In an even, toneless voice she told her name, age, and status, then waited for further questions.

"'Your father went out a little before ten o'clock on Tuesday night last, did he not?' asked the coroner very kindly.

"'Yes, sir, he did,' replied Mary quietly.

"'You had brought him a message from a gentleman whom you had met in the lane, and who wished to speak with your father?'

"'No, sir,' replied Mary, in the same even and toneless voice, 'I brought no message to father, and he went out on his own.'

"'But the gentleman you met in the lane,' insisted the coroner with some impatience.

"'I didn't meet anyone in the lane, sir. I never went out of the house that Tuesday night, it rained so.'

"'But the last witness, Samuel Holder heard you talking in the lane at nine o'clock.

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"'Samuel Holder was mistaken,' she replied imperturbably; 'I wasn't out of the house the whole of that night.'

"It would be useless for me," continued the man in the corner, "to attempt to convey to you the intense feeling of excitement which pervaded that crowded court, as that wizened little figure stood there for over half-an-hour, quietly and obstinately parrying the most rigid cross-examination.

"That she was lying—lying to shield the very man who perhaps had murdered her father—no one doubted for a single instant. Yet there she stood, sullen, apathetic, and defiant, flatly denying Samuel Holder's story from end to end, strictly adhering and swearing to her first statement, that her father went out 'on his own,' that she did not know where he was going to, and that she herself had never left the house that fatal Tuesday night.

"It did not seem to occur to her that by these statements she was hopelessly incriminating Samuel Holder, whom she was thus openly accusing of deliberate lies; on the contrary, many noticed a distinct touch of bitter animosity in the young girl against her former sweetheart, which was singularly emphasised when the coroner asked her whether she approved of the idea of a breach of promise action being brought against Mr. Ledbury.

"'No,' she said, 'all that talk about damages and breach of promise was between father and Sam Holder, because Sam had told father that he wouldn't mind marrying me if I had £5000 of my own.'

"Samuel Holder was mistaken," she replied.

"It would be impossible to render the tone of hatred and contempt with which the young girl uttered these words. One seemed to live through the whole tragedy of the past few months—the girl, pestered by the greed of her father, yet refusing obstinately to aid in causing a scandal, perhaps disgrace, to the man whom she had once loved and trusted.

"As nothing more could be got out of her, and as circumstances now seemed to demand it, the coroner adjourned the inquest. The police, as you may well imagine, wanted to make certain inquiries. Mind you, Mary Newton flatly refused to mention Mr. Ledbury's name; she was questioned and cross-questioned, yet her answer uniformly was:

"'I don't know what you're talking about. The person I was going to marry four years ago has gone out of my life—I have never seen him since. I saw no one on that Tuesday night.'

"Against that, when she was asked to swear that it was *not* Mr.—now Captain—Ledbury who had promised her marriage she flatly refused to do so.

"Of course, there was not a soul there who had not made up his or her mind that Captain Ledbury *had* met Mary Newton in the lane, and had heard from her that all his love letters to her were now in her father's hands, and that the old man meant to use these in order to extort money from him.

"Fearing the exposure and disgrace of so sensational a breach of promise action, and not having the money with which to meet Mat Newton's preposterous demands, he probably lost control over himself, and in a moment of impulse and mad rage had silenced the old man for ever.

"I assure you that at the adjourned inquest everybody expected to see Captain Ledbury in the custody of two constables. The police in the interim had been extremely reticent, and no fresh details of the extraordinary case had found its way into the papers, but fresh details of a sensational character were fully expected, and I can assure you the public were not disappointed.

"It is no use my telling you all the proceedings of that second most memorable day; I will try and confine myself to the most important points of this interesting mystery.

"I must tell you that the story told by the landlord of the Fernhead Arms was fully corroborated by several witnesses, all of whom testified to the fact that the old man came back from his visit to Fernhead Towers in a terrible fury, swearing to bring disgrace upon the scoundrel who had ruined his daughter.

"What occurred during that visit was explained by Edward Sanders, the butler at The Towers. According to the testimony of this witness, there was a large house-party staying with Sir John Fernhead to celebrate the engagement of his daughter; the party naturally included Captain Mervin Ledbury,

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his brother, Lord Walterton, with the latter's newly-married young wife, also many neighbours and friends.

"At about six o'clock on Monday evening, it appears, a disreputable-looking old man, whom Edward Sanders did not know, but who gave the name of Newton, rang at the front door bell of The Towers and demanded to see Mr. Ledbury. Sanders naturally refused to admit him, but the old man was so persistent, and used such strange language, that the butler, after much hesitation, decided to apprise Captain Ledbury of his extraordinary visitor.

"Captain Ledbury, on hearing that old man Newton wished to speak to him, much to Sanders' astonishment, came downstairs and elected to interview his extraordinary visitor in the dining-room, which was then deserted. Sanders showed the old man in, and waited in the hall. Very soon, however, he heard loud and angry voices, and the next moment Captain Ledbury threw open the dining-room door and said:

"'This man is mad or drunk; show him out, Sanders.'

"And without another word the captain walked upstairs, leaving Sanders the pleasant task of 'showing the old man out.' That this was done very speedily and pretty roughly we may infer from old man Newton's subsequent fury, and the threats he uttered even while he was being 'shown out.'

"Now you see, do you not?" continued the man in the corner, "that this evidence seemed to add another link to the chain which was incriminating young Mr. Ledbury in this terrible charge of murdering old man Newton.

"The young man himself was now with his regiment stationed at York. It appears that the house-party at Fernhead Towers was breaking up on the very day of old man Newton's strange visit thither. Lord and Lady Walterton left for town on the Tuesday morning, and Captain Ledbury went up to York on that very same fatal night.

"You must know that the small local station of Fernhead is quite close to The Towers. Captain Ledbury took the late local train there for Ayrsham Junction after dinner that night, arriving at the latter place at 9.15 with the intention of picking up the Midland express to the north at 10.15 p.m. later on.

"The police had ascertained that Captain Ledbury had got out of the local train at Ayrsham Junction at 9.15, and aimlessly strolled out of the station. Against that, it was definitely proved by several witnesses that the young man did catch the Midland express at 10.15 p.m., and travelled up north by it.

"Now there was the hitch, do you see?" added the funny creature excitedly. "Samuel Holder overheard a conversation in the fatal lane between Mary Newton and the stranger, whom everybody by now believed to be Captain Ledbury. Good! That was between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m., and, as it happened, the young man does seem to have unaccountably strolled about in the neighbourhood whilst waiting for his train; but remember that when Sam Holder left the stranger waiting in the lane, and went back towards Ayrsham in order to try and find old man Newton, he distinctly heard Ayrsham church clock striking ten.

"Now, the lane where the murder occurred is two and a half miles from Ayrsham Junction station, therefore it could not have been Captain Ledbury who was there lying in wait for the old man, as he could not possibly have had his interview with old Mat, quarrelled with him and murdered him, and then caught his train two and a half miles farther on, all in the space of fifteen minutes.

"Thus, even before the final verdict of 'Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown,' the case against Captain Mervin Ledbury had completely fallen to the ground. He must also have succeeded in convincing Sir John Fernhead of his innocence, as I see by the papers that Miss Fernhead has since become Mrs. Ledbury.

"But the result has been that the Ayrsham tragedy has remained an impenetrable mystery.

"'Who killed old man Newton? and why?' is a question which many people, including our clever criminal investigation department, have asked themselves many a time.

"It was not a case of vulgar assault and robbery, as the old man was not worth robbing, and the few coppers he possessed were found intact in his waistcoat pocket.

"Many people assert that Samuel Holder quarrelled with the old man and murdered him, but there are three reasons why that theory is bound to fall to the ground. Firstly, the total absence of any motive. Samuel Holder could have no possible object in killing the old man, but still, we'll waive that; people do quarrel—especially if they are confederates, as these two undoubtedly were—and quarrels do sometimes end fatally. Secondly, the weapon which caused the old

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man's death—a heavily-leaded cane of foreign make, with solid silver ferrule.

"Now, I ask you, where in the world could a village carpenter pick up an instrument of that sort? Moreover no one ever saw such a thing in Sam Holder's hands or in his house. When he walked to the Fernhead Arms in order to try and find the old man, he had nothing of the sort in his hand, and in spite of the most strenuous efforts on the part of the police, the history of that cane was never traced.

"Then, there is a third reason why obviously Sam Holder was not guilty of the murder, though that reason is a moral one; I am referring to Mary Newton's attitude at the inquest. She lied, of that there could not be a shadow of doubt; she was determined to shield her former lover, and incriminated Sam Holder only because she wished to save another man.

"Obviously, old Newton went out on that dark wet night in order to meet someone in the lane, that someone could not have been Sam Holder, whom he met anywhere and everywhere, and every day in his own house.

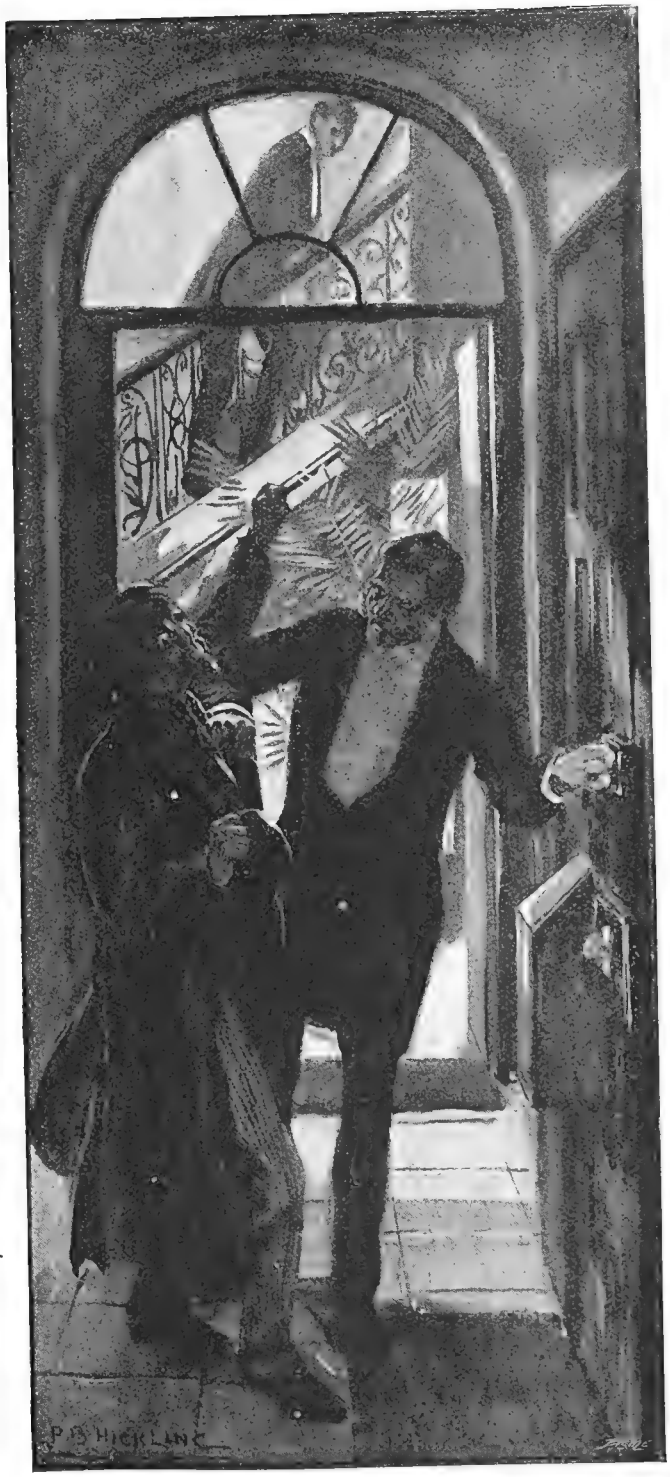
"There! you see that Sam Holder was obviously innocent, that Captain Ledbury could not have committed the murder, that surely Mary Newton did not kill her own father, and that in such a case, common-sense should have come to the rescue, and not have left this case, what it now is, a tragic and impenetrable mystery."

[*Here the reader should himself try to fathom the mystery.*—ED.]

IV.

"But," I said at last, for indeed I was deeply mystified, "what does common-sense argue?—the case seems to me absolutely hopeless."

He surveyed his beloved bit of string for a moment, and his



"Without another word the captain walked upstairs, leaving Sanders the pleasant task of 'showing the old man out.'"

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mild blue eyes blinked at me over his bone-rimmed spectacles.

"Common-sense," he said at last, with his most apologetic manner, "tells me that Ayrsham village is a remote little place, where a daily paper is unknown, and where no one reads the fashionable intelligence, or knows anything about birthday honours."

"What *do* you mean?" I gasped in amazement.

"Simply this, that no one at Ayrsham village, certainly not Mary Newton herself, had realised that one of the Mr. Ledburys, whom all had known at The Limes four years ago, had since become Lord Walterton."

"Lord Walterton," I ejaculated wholly incredulously.

"Why, yes!" he replied quietly. "Do you mean to say you never thought of that? that it never occurred to you that Mary Newton may have admitted to her father that Mr. Ledbury had been the man who had so wickedly wronged her, but that she, in her remote little village, had also no idea that the Mr. Ledbury she meant was recently made and is now styled Lord Walterton?

"Old man Newton, who knew of the gossip which had coupled his daughter's name, years ago, with the younger Mr. Ledbury, naturally took it for granted that she was referring to him. Moreover, we may take it from the girl's subsequent attitude that she did all she could to shield the man whom she had once loved; women, you know, have that sort of little way with them.

"Old Newton, fully convinced that young Ledbury was the man he wanted, went up to The Towers and had the stormy interview, which no doubt greatly puzzled the young Hussar. He undoubtedly spoke of it to his brother, Lord Walterton, who, newly married and of high social position, would necessarily dread a scandal as much as anybody.

"Lord Walterton went up to town with his young wife the following morning. Ayrsham is only forty minutes from London. He came down in the evening, met Mary in the lane, asked to see her father, and killed him in a moment of passion, when he found that the old man's demands were preposterously unreasonable. Moreover, Englishmen in all grades of society have an innate horror of being bullied or blackmailed; the murder probably was not premeditated, but the outcome of rage at being browbeaten by the old man.

"You see the police did not use their common-sense over so simple a matter. They naturally made no inquiries as to Lord Walterton's movements, who seemingly had absolutely nothing to do with the case. If they had, I feel convinced that they would have found that his lordship would have had some difficulty in satisfying everybody as to his whereabouts on that particular Tuesday night.

"Think of it, it is so simple—the only possible solution of that strange and unaccountable mystery."

A GREAT STORY.

A Story that will keep you enthralled with interest from start to finish: that is a true description of "Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer," the new serial, the first instalment of which appears in the Christmas Number of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE. It is a tale of the buccaneers—at once the most romantic and the most terrible of all the pirates of history, and, of all the buccaneers, Sir Henry Morgan may unhesitatingly be awarded first place, both for his wonderful powers as a leader and for his cruelty as a conqueror.

Sir Henry Morgan was a real man, and the history of his doings makes one of the most thrilling stories that has ever been written. What we recommend you to do is to buy the current PEARSON'S MAGAZINE at once, read the first instalment, and give your newsagent an order to supply you with the magazine for the next six months.

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Bombita Chico, the first matador of Spain, in fighting costume.

THE WORLD THROUGH OTHER EYES

XI.—THE MATADOR'S POINT OF VIEW.

Here the Matador Describes the Spanish National Sport, and his Sensations when Standing up in Deadly Encounter with the Bull.

Bombita Chico in private dress.

By Bombita Chico

(Spain's Most Famous Matador).

Edited by John N. Raphael.

I do not think you people of the colder north quite realise the true position of the matador. You look upon him as a man—half-man, half-brute—who occupies in Spain much the position of a prize-fighter elsewhere.

Some of you, perhaps, who have been to our country and have seen a bull-fight, class us a little higher, and place the matador upon the pedestal of the football professional; but you are wrong all of you, and the equivalent of the bull-fighter, as the Spaniard sees him, is the successful tenor, or the great actor-manager, upon the evening of his triumph.

You smile at this, and, as you do so, wonder perhaps that "a man who kills bulls for a living" should have such choice of language. I, too, laugh at your amusement. We matadors are no more butchers than your man-killer whom the world calls a general and loves to honour.

But let us to our bulls. We have arrived, my troup and I, in Salamanca, say, the evening before the *corrida* or bull-fight. The town is gay with flags and bunting, the streets are filled with folk in holiday attire, and at each street corner are crowds excitedly perusing the gay-coloured posters, announcing the *corrida* of the morrow.

It is by no means my first *corrida,* no, nor my fiftieth; but as, every hundred yards or so, my own name greets me in great letters inches high, I feel just that throb of excitement which every servant of the public's pleasure feels the day before his coming triumph or defeat.

And mine is to be no matter of one evening's work, no few hours in which the first few minutes will decide the question of applause or of derision. For the bull-fight is to last four days. A four days' battle with the bulls of Miura, of Ibarra, Valle, and Saltillo—all of them young, all of them fierce, and, strange though this may seem to you, all of them as eager for the combat as I am myself, for the bull-fight is not a slaughter, but a battle—a battle in which the man triumphs, it is true, but triumphs by his intelligence, and fairly.

The evening is passed comparatively quietly. If I permitted it, the countless friends I have in Salamanca would make a festival of it; but this may not be, and I do not stay long out in the streets, where I am recognised and followed by great cheering crowds at every turn, but go to my hotel, and before nine o'clock to bed to dream of victory.

I rise late, and after coffee and a *cigarillo,* make for the Plaza Nueva, where the battle of this afternoon is to take place, to look at the bulls, the horses, and my men, and see that everything is all in order; for I have work to do before the fight this afternoon.

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The matador is master in the *corrida*, and I myself see into every detail, for the least lack of care may mean death to a comrade.

Come with me. Climb this ladder—hold tight—and look down on the inclosures where the bulls are. What do you think of them? I never pay my morning visit to the bulls without a thrill. Look at that black one there. Does it not seem as if he recognised in me his enemy? *Carámba!* It is true, our Spanish saying: "Be careful of that man, he has the eye of a Miura bull."

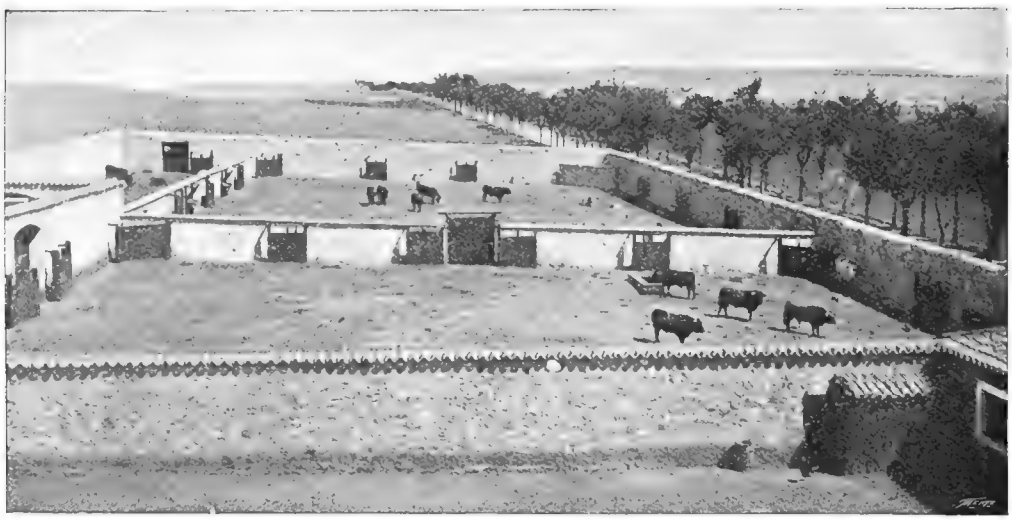
The clock is striking ten, and, as the last stroke sounds, my men, some thirty of them, join us on the platform over the inclosures, to run the bulls into the *corrales* or cattle-pen, and thence into the dark *toril* or stable, where they are kept until we let them into the sunblaze of the arena. It is no easy matter. In the inclosures the bulls are practically at liberty, and as no man can, with impunity, approach them, our work in driving them by means of poles and cords requires some generalship and no mean skill.

I do not lay a hand upon the ropes myself, my men would not allow it, for one false step, one sudden pull from the strong brute beneath us, and I might fall down on to those great pointed horns, and in an instant be trampled to death by those gleaming hoofs.

But look down on the bulls. Are they not beauties? Look at their breadth of shoulder and their glossy hides. See how they toss their horned heads to dodge the ropes, and how they seem to whisper to one another, "There, above, upon the platform, is Bombita."

Come, a little further, and we will watch them enter the *toril*. Look at the entrance here. As I lie flat upon the platform, ten feet above it, it is a great black hole, a tunnel into Erebus. Small wonder that the bulls struggle and fight our poles and cords with every trick and every ruse of which they know. Now Pedro! Come then, Gomez! Your pole, there! Tighten that cord. Knot that one, loosen the other. That's it. Bueno! They are in now, all six of them, and I must go to see the *picadores* and the horses.

Here they are, poor brutes, lined up along the wall. Poor brutes I call them, not because death is to be the portion of some of them in an hour or two, but because they have been allowed to live so long. They are the butcher's refuse, horses that he deems too thin for cats' meat even; and, as I stand and look at them, they are not horses to my mind, scarcely living things, but merely necessary mounts for my *picadores*.



View of the inclosures where the fighting bulls are kept.

And here they come, the *picadores* dressed as I am myself in everyday attire. I make each one of them mount on his sorry steed and try it, using the heavy stick he carries when off duty as a lance, and each of them then marks his horse. But it is twelve o'clock, I must be off to luncheon and to dress myself for the bull-fight.

Molina, my valet and factotum, has done

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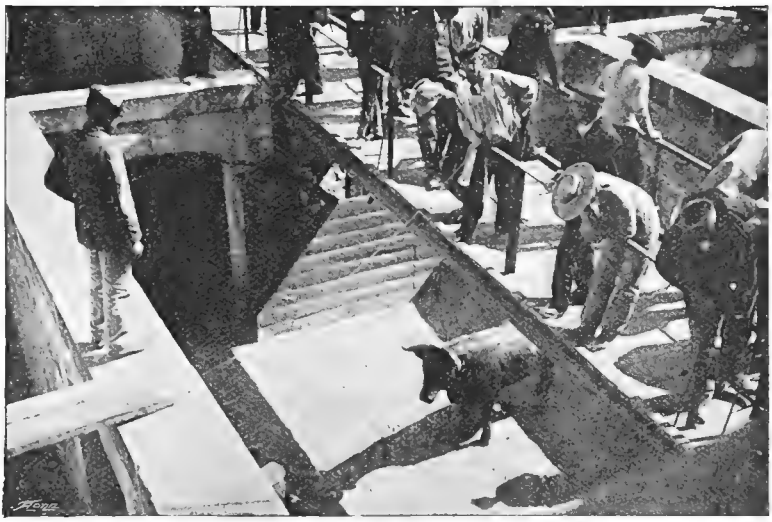
what he can to make my suite of rooms in the hotel as comfortable as possible, and has prepared my luncheon, for he watches over me and cares for me, does Molina, as a trainer watches the meals of a Derby crack. A light repast, and then I pass into my bedroom, which on these battle days looks like the dressing-room of the successful tenor I have mentioned.



Inclosure adjoining the arena. From here the bulls are driven out, with long poles, to the fight.

Molina peels my town clothes off me, and tells me all the news of Salamanca, while Mozo, my barber, sets to work to plait the *coléta,* the little pigtail into which he works the black pad which is to protect the nape of my neck in case of a sudden fall. The nape of his neck is the Achilles' heel of the matador, for, as I face the bull baldheaded, and face him invariably, no matter what the danger, a sudden push, a sudden fall, and I am dead. This *coléta* of mine has saved my life at least three times. Four, says Molina; I—I have forgotten.

Ah! we are ready; and, for the first time since the morning, I feel my real self, Bombita Chico. My tightly-fitting breeches, the broad black belt, all help to display the easy movements of my limbs, and I plead guilty to a moment's vanity as here before the glass I twist and turn, spring lightly and gracefully to right and left, playing an imaginary bull. Those of Miura are as graceful and as beautiful as any of God's creatures. I feel as lithe, as active, as any bull. The battle is to follow, and the victory.

A priest is sent down by the bishop to bless Bombita Chico before the fight. The boy on the priest's right is carrying the holy oils and host.

On goes the small round cap we call the *montéra,* the little *jaquetilla* or *bolero,* the gold-bespangled cloak, and I am ready. The time, Molina? "In twenty minutes it will be three o'clock." Just time, then, to go out to the Plaza.

I am nervous, I admit it, but nervous as the general who knows that he will ultimately lead his troops to victory. Molina does not speak to me (he knows my way), but quietly hands a cigar to me, lights it, and, between rows of bowing servants, gaping foreigners, and others who have gathered in the corridors to see Bombita pass, I go down to the carriage which is waiting to take me and my comrades to the Plaza. They are fine fellows, my comrades, and, as I give one last look at them, and they follow me into the red and yellow carriage, all hats fly off, and "*Ollé! ollé!*" shout the people in the street.

The carriage draws up at the private entrance to the Plaza; I throw away the stump of my cigar—there is a flash of dark eyes and of white teeth, the wave of

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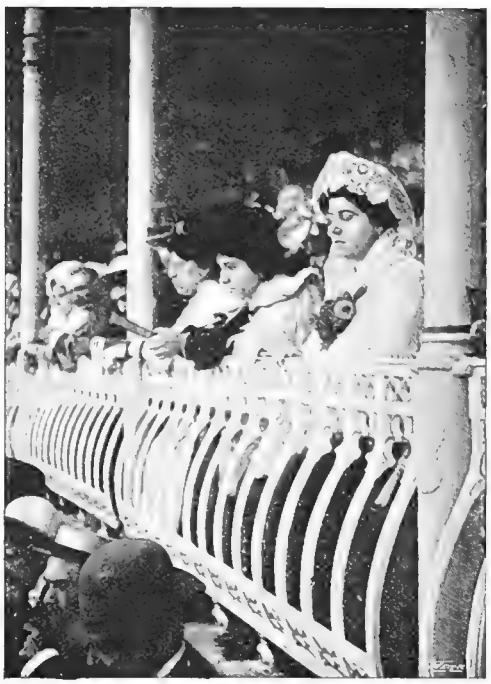
a black lace mantilla, and one of Salamanca's beauties has the stump as a keepsake. A throng of friends and privileged amateurs crowd round me, clasp my hands, my cloak, hurl questions and admiring exclamations at me, and I am swept into the courtyard of the Plaza, followed by Padre Don José Manuel Bartolomeo, and his small sacristan, who carries the Viaticum in a small padlocked box. I kneel before the padre and receive his blessing. He is sent down by Salamanca's bishop to the bull-fight in case one of us should be wounded mortally.

While I am getting ready I can hear outside in the great Plaza the chatter, laughter, and the murmurs of the wave of people sweeping into the seats, waiting for them. In a few moments all will be in readiness, and not a place in that great circle, rising in serried rows up to the outer wall, will be untenanted. I hear the murmur of the impatient crowd. The picadores are at their posts. The *alguazil*, gendarme, has caught the key to the *toril* thrown by the Governor; hoarse cheers herald the opening of the door.



Spanish ladies watching a bull-fight.

"*Los toros van a empezar!*" (the bull-fight will begin), the people shout; I hear the crash of the orchestra—and in we go, I at the head of my *cuadrilla*, or band of armed men, smiling and confident, Quinito on my left, pensive, but confident likewise.

And now the fight begins. The bull bolts in, then stops, blinded by the sudden glare of light after the darkness of the *toril*. He stamps his polished hoofs, kicks up the sand, and snorts. It is as though he singles me out from the crowd. I, for the moment, hardly look at him, for my work is not yet. Angry he is, but not sufficiently.

Come, then, the picadores! And as they ride their sorry horses up to *el toro*, and tantalise him with their lances, my eyes wander round the seated crowd.

The first part of a bull-fight is, to the man who plays the leading part in it, the prelude merely. I feel, in a kind of subconsciousness, the fierce excitement which is growing up above me in the amphitheatre, I hear the shouts as the picadores dodge the bull.

Then do I feel that all eyes are upon me. A twitch to my cloak, my short sword crosswise in my hands, and lightly, gracefully, as though I were advancing to the dance, I step out round half of the arena, remove my hat, and, standing bareheaded, my back to the bull, and just beneath the presidential box, I clear my throat, and in a loud, firm voice, I cry, "Don Ramon, Alcalde of Salamanca, I am about to kill the bull, in honour of you, most excellent President, in honour of the municipality of this town, and of all the beautiful women of the country."

"*Ollé, Ollé!* Bombita, Bombita!" cries the crowd, and the great maelstrom above me becomes a mass of waving fans, handkerchiefs, and hands.

Now it is bull and I! The public disappears. I have no eyes, no thought for anyone or anything but that great angry creature which stands facing me some thirty yards away, pawing the ground, snorting his anger. All that I see of him is the great head with the quivering nostrils, and the two small and slenderly-built fore feet, with, just behind, a whisk of lashing tail. There is no public, no arena, no bull's body even. Nothing but that huge head, moving from side to side, and those two firmly planted hoofs.

I face him, my eyes upon his, and move slowly forward. Did I not move, I think the brute would hypnotise me into immobility, then spring, and gore me. But I step slowly on, and when I am within a yard of him, I flash my red *muleta* from my shoulder in his face. It needed a man's strength of mind to wait until I was within a yard of him to do so.

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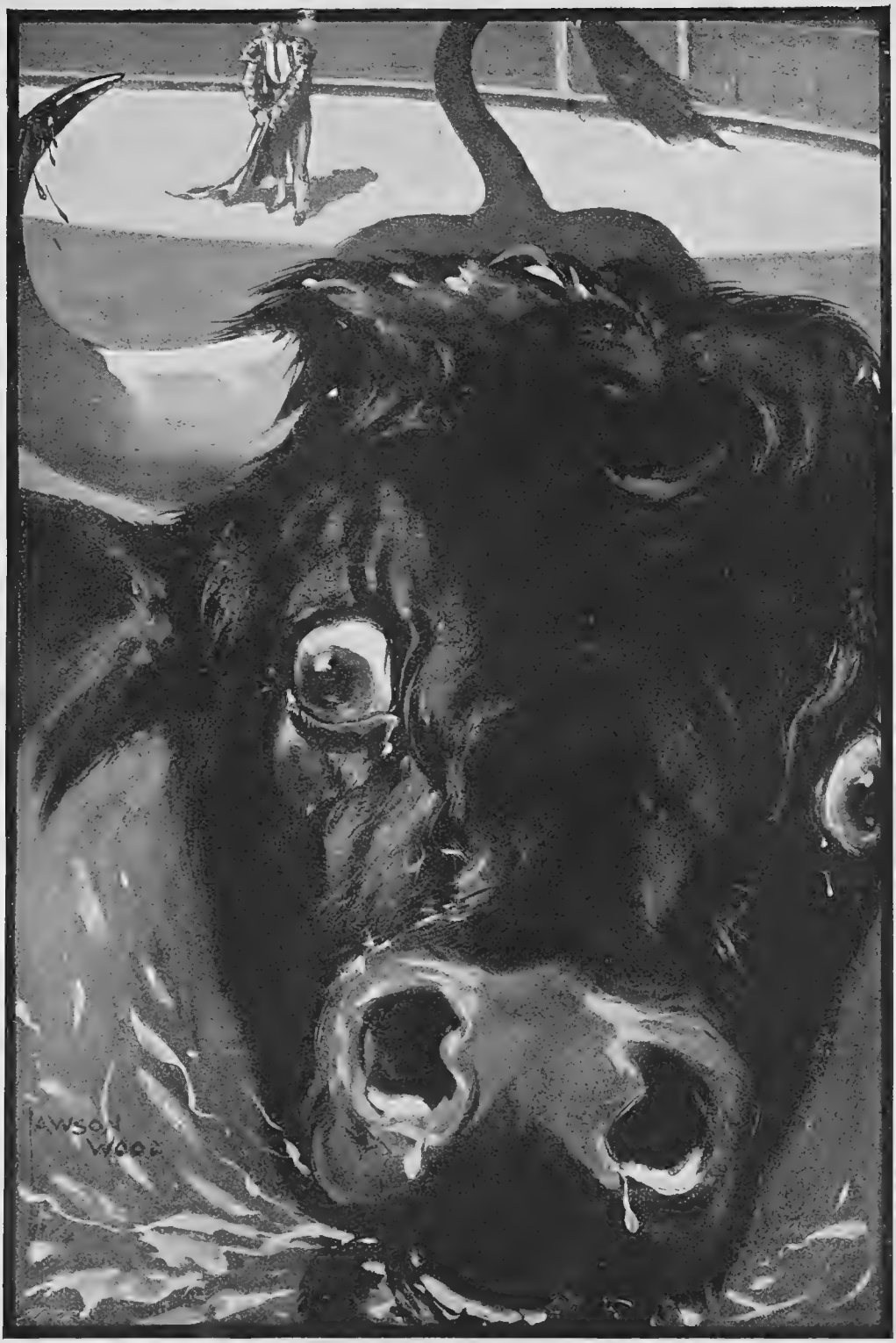

To Bombita Chico, as he stands in the arena ready for the fight, the bull presents this spectacle. Before him he sees the huge shaggy head, with quivering nostrils, and eyes out-staring and aflame.

Google

Entry of Bombita Chico (the foremost figure on the left), followed by the *cuadrilla*, or armed men, and the picadores. The latter goad the bull into fury before the fight begins.

The bull gives a loud bellow, throws up his head until I see the white splash of throat underneath it, and feel the foetid breath full in my face. Another pass with the *muleta,* and *el toro* lowers his horns, and makes a rush at me. In that one second, I feel that it is good to live, and life thrills through me with a joy which is a pain in its intensity. The rush is instantaneous, but my eyes were on his, and I could feel it coming, just as a skilful fencer feels his foeman's coming onrush ere it comes.

My two hands grip the brute's great horns. They slip slightly. I gain a firmer grip, and with one spring leap right across the straining muscles of his neck, and, in far less time than it would take to speak of it, I am upon his other side, and flashing my *muleta* in his face again.

I know in that one moment how the bull feels. It is to him as though that great arena were filled full with Bombita Chico, and to me also the arena is filled up with bull. Not bulls. I see but one, and of that one but little. Just the enormous head, the quivering nostrils, mouth spewing foam, and great, sharp horns.

Then comes the rush, and run and tumble of the fight. My comrades, nimble men and skilful, run in and plant their darts in the bull's heaving shoulders. He makes a rush at one, then at another, then chases one right across the arena, forcing him to leap the barrier, while the crowds up above us cheer now the bull, now picadores, then yell, in one wild shout, my name, Bombita Chico!

That is the final call to battle. One of us two must die now, *el toro.* Thou, or Bombita! Aye! My foot slipped, and my life's blood had nearly rushed to swell the stream in which my footing gave, and which is sinking slowly into the sand. But I am up again, and he, mad with his fury and the pain of his wounds, blundered and missed me. But my *muleta* is torn into strips, and there was a pain in my right thigh just now. Was it a wound? I neither know, nor care.

Picadores and *cuadrilla* hurling darts and flaunting *muletas* (red cloaks), to excite the bull to fury.

Have at me, then! And once again I flash a fresh *muleta,* which someone has thrown me, into the eyes of the great beast, which stands a moment breathing vengeance and hatred at me. He shakes his head, tosses his horns, and rushes, but I spring aside, and as I do so, plack! With the flat, broad side of my sword I

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Bombita Chico meeting a rush from the bull.

slap the heaving, steaming flank, slap it in insult, as a daring master of *duello* slaps tauntingly at the fierce adversary over whose skill his own skill has the mastery.

He faces me again, and, for a instant, I feel like a mere pigmy. He, my enemy, is huge, and I am small, quite small. Then we talk to each other, do the bull and I—talk as men talk in mortal combat. I taunt him. He growls back taunts and defiance. I enrage him. Once again he rushes at me. I spring to one side, shorten my sword, and with one smart blow, *habet*, and he falls.

Have we been fighting for a month, or for a moment?

It is as though, with that one blow of my sharp sword, I had wiped a huge picture from a window, and could see out into the countryside again. As the bull falls dead at my feet, that great horned head has disappeared which for those last few moments, or few years, has filled my vision, and now I see the people in the rising rows of seats all round me, and hear them howling in delirium of joy.

A rain of hats, cigars, of gloves, of money, of trifles of all kinds pours in upon me; the public shouts, applauds, and calls my name, and while the mules, with their bright trappings and their bells, are driven in and drag the bull out to the butchers, who will skin him, cut him to pieces, and divide him, I, smiling and at ease, stroll round the Plaza, throwing the hats and veils and fans back to their owners, dexterously and with graceful accuracy. It is no easy thing to whirl them back up to the top rows, but it must be done, and done with grace and seeming ease. Bombita must not show emotion.

That afternoon I kill two other bulls, Quinito kills the fourth, and not until I have left the arena does the reaction come. But then it comes. I feel limp, dead with fatigue, and almost hate the cheers which greet me as my carriage drives me back to my hotel. Molina pulls my stained and reeking clothes from me, plunges me into a bath, between the sheets of a clean bed, and in an instant I am in a sound and dreamless sleep, which lasts until the evening.

But the excitement of the *corrida!* The glory of that instant when I feel my sword run into the bull's heart, is worth a lifetime. That moment, before pity for the dead bull comes, is glorious, and worth all the hard work, all the fatigue, worth everything.

The last scene. Bombita Chico is about to run the bull through the heart with his sword.

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The Stockbroker, the Dragon, and the Lady Typist.

Concerning a Wife who did not Approve of Lady Typists.

Josiah Polson King was a little man, a very little man, with narrow shoulders, and a generally shrivelled-up appearance. He wore scanty side whiskers and a chronically querulous expression, and, except for a fringe of grey hair, was bald. A pair of gold pince-nez bestraddling a high, bony nose completes his interesting portrait. Lastly, he was a stockbroker, and possessed of considerable wealth.

Mr. Polson King, like most small men, had taken unto himself a very large wife, and, like a good many, perhaps, had regretted doing so ever since. For truly the stockbroker's wife was one to strike terror in the boldest hearts. Standing very little short of six feet, and largely built, she was a most imposing specimen of womanhood, turning the scale—if not breaking it—at something like eighteen stone, while her diminutive husband, chequebook and all, would probably fail to register more than eight.

The forbidding aspect and tyrannic disposition of this worthy dame had gained for her the sobriquet of "the Dragon," and by this suggestive title she was invariably referred to by the irreverent youth, and—alas! that I should say so—adults of the suburban circle in which the Polson Kings, by virtue of their thousands, held a not inconsiderable place.

Anyhow, Maria was the one person of whom the stockbroker stood in awe; and if the unfortunate clerks, who, at his city office, cowered before the wizened little man's cold, sarcastic smile and caustic remarks had only been aware of the deference with which their tyrant treated his stalwart wife, and the alacrity with which he obeyed her slightest behest, the knowledge might have tinged with a lining of silver the clouded lot of their daily life.

But, fortunately for their employer's reputation, this crumb of comfort was denied them, for the Dragon confined her sphere of influence strictly to the home circle, and never put in an appearance at the London office—never, that is, until the eventful day of which I am about to relate. And thereby hangs this story.

* * * * *

The Polson Kings were at breakfast.

Josiah, with one eye on the clock and the other on his newspaper, was disposing of his matutinal kidneys at a rate which (*vid* indigestion) may have accounted for the general lugubriousness of his countenance, and which was perhaps warranted by the fact that he had barely ten minutes to spare before sprinting for his train; while the lady, serene in the

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knowledge that the whole day was before her, ate hers in a more leisurely manner, perusing the *Standard* the while.

Suddenly, with an impatient "Pshaw!" she threw the paper down; and the stockbroker, at that moment looking up, found her cold gaze fixed squarely on him.

"Er—did you speak, my dear?" he inquired.

With one massive forefinger his wife pointed to the article she had been reading, and which had excited her comment.

"I should think so, indeed!" she snorted; "the forward hussies!"

Then, in answer to the mild interrogation in her husband's eyes:

"The article says, Josiah, that girls as typists are not so sought after as formerly; and that employers, finding that, although cheaper, they are not to be depended on, and are apt to—er—flirt with the male clerks, are getting rid of them. And very properly, too!

"I, for one, would never countenance such a thing," she continued. "By the way, Josiah, some of *your* communications are pewritten. *You*, I take it, do not employ a er—" (the Dragon turned her nose up in readiness for the next word) "lady typists?"

Mr. Polson King seemed to be engrossed in the financial columns of his paper; but, nevertheless, he had heard; and, trusting that his better half would next put the question in a less direct form, inquired:

"Oh—ah—I beg your pardon—what did you say, Maria?"

The Dragon calmly repeated the question in the identical words.

There was no escape.

The stockbroker took his courage in both hands, and—told a lie!

"No — er — certainly not, Maria," he faltered, "er—certainly not. By Jove!" (glancing at the clock) "I'm cutting it rather fine!"

And rising abruptly from the table, he seized his hat, coat, and stick, and hurriedly left the room.

His wife looked doubtfully after his receding form, and shook her head.

Fifteen minutes to nine was the stockbroker's invariable time for leaving home, and the clock still lacked two minutes of the quarter. Bearing in mind his evident desire to avoid discussion on the subject, Mrs. Polson King shook her head again. This was certainly a matter which required investigation.

* * * * *

The stockbroker walked quickly down the gravelled drive and through the gateway, and then, remembering that he was rather earlier than usual, slowed up a little.

He scowled fiercely at an unoffending chimney-pot, and struck his stick impatiently on the pavement.

"Dash the woman!" he said testily. "Deuce take her! Why should she trouble about things that don't concern her? I suppose I shall have her poking round the office now." And he sighed heavily and walked on.

"I can't get rid of her," he continued, musing. "No—I'm hanged if I will!—Maria or no Maria."

Mr. Polson King was beginning to kick.

Where should he get a more competent typist than Miss Hudson? he reflected. A model of neatness and accuracy, her nimble fingers fairly flew over the keyboard; and, possessed as she was of, what is more rare, a good share of sound common-sense, she was a typist such as is not found every day. Moreover, her wages were only one pound a week.

Yes—now he thought of it—the girl was good-looking, too. That would be another point against her in his wife's eyes.

However, by the time he had reached the station, Josiah had come to a conclusion. It would, perhaps, be necessary to pay his typist a further two shillings or so a week to secure her co-operation in his scheme for outwitting his amiable spouse, but—well—she was worth it.

And as he entered his office, he felt in a better frame of mind by far.

* * * * *

Miss Hudson had just finished taking down the last of a batch of correspondence which her employer had been dictating, and, with pencil poised over notebook, waited to hear if he had done with her for the time.

"Er—thank you—that will do now," he began. And then as the girl rose to go, blurted out:

"Oh—about the matter of the rise you mentioned the other day" (he had absolutely refused to give it at the time), "I have decided to give you—er—another half-crown per week."

Miss Hudson opened her eyes in surprise.

"Thank you," she said quietly.

"And," continued the stockbroker hurriedly, "there is a little matter in which I should like your — er — co-operation. It appears some id—er—I should say, person has written an article as to the undesirability

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of having for typists persons of—er—your sex; and, unfortunately, Mrs. Polson King has seen it, and has—er—gone so far as to state that she is of the — er — er — same opinion.

"Now, I have every reason to be satisfied with you, Miss Hudson, and see no reason to change because of a woman's—er—whim. But she must be humoured. Yes" (as a picture of the Dragon's grim, determined visage rose up before him), "er—she must be humoured."

"Oh—quite so," murmured his stenographer, in a mystified way.

"And so," he pursued, "when my wife inquired this morning if *I* employed a lady in the position in question, I — er — um — I thought it best to—er—say 'No.'" And he glared defiantly at his *employée*.

Miss Hudson looked thoughtfully out of the window, made a *moué* to herself, and smiled. She began to have a very fair inkling of Mrs. Polson King's character.

"Yes?" she said encouragingly.

"So," said the stockbroker, "if my wife *should* . . . I say, if she *should*" (he knew well it was only too certain she would) "happen to—er—call here . . . perhaps you would not mind—er—keeping out of her sight?"

Miss Hudson's eyes danced mischievously as she looked round the bare room.

"Do you think the copying press would give me sufficient shelter?" she suggested gravely, "or" (thoughtfully) "the cupboard?"

Her employer looked at her suspiciously.

"The only place for you to—er—*go* is the strong room," he replied stiffly. "As you know, it is always open while I am at work here. And—er—perhaps it would be as well to remove your hat and jacket from the front office and place them there, too.

"That is all" (hurriedly) "—er—thank you."

And with a relieved air the stockbroker saw his typist quit the room. It was, however, anything but an untroubled day for the anxious Josiah. With one eye ever directed on the glass panel which permitted a view of the outer office, in anticipation and dread of the Dragon's visit, how could he give his attention to the work in hand? And after he had caught himself in the act of making a mistake which would have resulted in a dead loss to him of a round five hundred pounds, he lay back in his chair and, mopping the perspiration from his brow, wondered whether if, after all, he had not better dismiss his lady clerk and live in peace.

* * * * *

It was a quarter to six. The remainder of the stockbroker's staff had left at 5.30; but there were a few letters just typed by Miss Hudson which awaited her employer's signature; and, having brought them in, she stood, with hat on head and gloves in hand, waiting to put them into their envelopes and post them on her way from the office.

It was then that the dreaded moment arrived, and the Dragon swooped down on the erstwhile unruffled calm of Mr. Polson King's city office.

A cab drew up outside.

Apprehensively glancing up from his letters, Josiah saw the well-known form of his wife descend and engage in a brief, but victorious, altercation with the astonished cabby; and, frantically directing his typist to the strong room, and gently closing the door, the unhappy stockbroker regained his seat just as the Dragon, finding the outer office empty and coming straight through, swept into the inner sanctum and looked suspiciously round.

The guileless Josiah gave a well-simulated start of surprise.

"I was just leaving, my dear," he commenced blandly, carefully folding the last of his letters and inserting it in the envelope. "It's not often I—er—have the pleasure of a visit here."

His wife smiled grimly.

"I've been shopping," she said, "and thought I would call in for you on my way to the station. Ah!" sniffing, "what a peculiar smell there is here."

There was certainly a faint odour of violets in the room, which was probably accounted for by the fact that this was the secreted Miss Hudson's favourite perfume.

The stockbroker trembled.

"Indeed!" said he, sniffing in turn. "I can't say I notice it." (The Recording Angel was having a busy time!) "Very probably young Raikes, or one of the others, uses a scent.

"Er—I am just locking up," he continued hastily, as out of the tail of his eye he saw that the Dragon appeared unconvinced. "Perhaps you would prefer to walk slowly on to the station. We shall be able to manage the 6.15."

"I will wait for you, dear," she replied amiably; and, to his consternation, calmly seated herself while he found his hat and other impedimenta.

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The strong-room door locked automatically on being shut; and the question of how to release the unfortunate typist without his wife seeing her was troubling the stockbroker exceedingly.

"You had better make haste, Josiah," Mrs. Polson King said sharply, "if we are to catch the 6.15. The Hartley-Browns are dining with us this evening, and Mrs. Parkinson. So, don't be late."

"N—no, my dear," said the unhappy Josiah, the perspiration standing in beads on his brow, as he cudgelled his brains for a way out of the difficulty.

But there was no excuse for further lingering. He must lock up the office, he decided, go on to the station, and then, on the plea that he had forgotten something, make an excuse to return.

And arm-in-arm husband and wife wended their way to the station.

"Confound it!" said the stockbroker suddenly. "I've clean forgotten that account. I *must* go through it to-night." And he stopped undecidedly and took a furtive glance at the Dragon.

"Confound it!" said the stockbroker suddenly. "I've clean forgotten that account."

"You had better walk on," he continued. "I shan't be five minutes. I must hurry back to the office and get it."

"Very well," said his wife.

And back Josiah went.

He looked round apprehensively after he had left her. But she was still standing there. Again when he turned the corner. But, no! She was not following him. And his heart grew light.

Standing at the door of his office he found a young man, while leaning against the kerb were two cycles, and if Mr. Polson King had been sufficiently interested to spare them a glance he would have noticed that one was a lady's machine. But his thoughts were elsewhere.

On seeing the stockbroker approach, the young man stepped forward.

"Mr. Polson King, I believe?" he said. And then, on that gentleman admitting his identity, "Can you tell me if Miss Hudson is still here? She promised to meet me outside your office at six o'clock, but the place appears to be locked up."

"She will be out in a minute," said her employer in a tone which was surprisingly agreeable for him. And he light-heartedly opened the door and entered.

Then a sudden doubt crossed his mind.

"Do you mind—er—looking up the street and telling me if a tall—er—stout lady is coming this way?" he said nervously.

The young man looked.

"There's someone turning the corner now who appears to answer that description," he replied. "Looks about seven feet high, and I *have* seen more—er—slender women. She

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appears to be making uncommonly good time down the street, too."

Josiah groaned.

"It's Maria!" he said dejectedly. "Oh, dash it! What shall I do?"

And in a few disjointed sentences he explained the situation to the cyclist, who in his turn informed the stockbroker that his name was Hamilton, and that he had the honour of being engaged to Miss Hudson, who had promised to come out for a cycle ride with him that evening.

Hamilton came inside and looked quickly round.

"I have it," he said, entering into the fun of the thing. (It was no fun to the stockbroker!) "You must let Ethel out, and she can hide behind this outer door, which I see opens right back. Then leave the strong-room door open, and I will go inside with you. Your wife, who" (with a smile) "appears anxious to see you, will no doubt go straight in there, and while she is inside Ethel can get away."

Mr. Polson King pressed the young man's hand gratefully.

Rushing to the strong-room door, with trembling fingers he opened it, released the waiting—and considerably ruffled—typist, and persuaded her to take up the position Hamilton had suggested.

The Dragon had by this time reached the street door. The cycles outside had caught her eagle eye, and the fact that one was a lady's machine did not escape her.

With determination expressed on every feature, she grasped her parasol, as if for a charge, and precipitated herself into the office. Straight through to the inner room she came, and then hearing her husband in conversation with some unknown person, with a grim smile entered the strong-room to find herself face to face with Josiah and—a man.

Meanwhile the much harassed lady typist made her escape.

"You—my dear?" said the stockbroker, looking up from a bundle of papers he was holding (Heaven only knows what they were—he didn't!), and summoning into his voice all the surprise he could muster.

Josiah had been stooping; perhaps that was why his face was so red. But the furtive look in his eye made his irate spouse doubt—and there was the lady's bicycle outside.

Suddenly a brown object caught her eye, and swooping down on it the Dragon possessed herself of a lady's kid glove. A faint scent of violets clung to it.

"This is not yours, I think, Josiah," she said acidly. "It probably belongs to this young man."

The cyclist's eyes twinkled. "Ah, yes, madam. Thank you. How careless of me."

But Mrs. Polson King did not relax her grip on this piece of evidence, and favoured the intruder with a look which ought to have annihilated him.

As for the stockbroker, he had simply wilted under the first glance of her eyes when the accusing glove was flashed before him.

And then the Dragon let herself go, and exhausted her vocabulary in her denunciation of the deceitful Josiah.

"As for the shameless hussy——" she continued.

But Hamilton stepped forward, and there was a dangerous light in his eyes.

"Kindly keep Miss Hudson out of the conversation, please," he said quietly.

But the enraged dame was in no mood to be stopped, and despairing of ever checking the flow of her abuse, the typist's disgusted *fiancé* stepped outside, and, swinging to the heavy door, left her vociferating.

Then, closing the street door, he mounted his machine, and rode off after his lady-love.

* * * * *

The lovers spent a happy evening together.

Dismissing the stockbroker and his charming wife from their minds, they enjoyed to the full the pleasures of a cool evening spin over perfect roads, and it was past nine when Hamilton brought his sweetheart to her home in Leytonstone.

"It's been a glorious spin, Dick!" she said happily, "and now" (with a little grimace) "for to-morrow—and Mr. Polson King."

"I pity the old chap," said Hamilton carelessly. "Did you see Mrs. K.?"

"I had no chance, but—I *heard* her. How did you leave them? Was it all right?"

"H'm—I don't know. The last I saw of her she was with her husband in the strong room, and—well—just giving him fits! She was brandishing her parasol and declaiming at the extreme limit of her voice and vocabulary! So I slammed the door on the pair of them—the old hag!"

"You slammed the door—the door of the strong-room?" repeated his *fiancée* in a horror-stricken whisper.

"Yes," repentantly. "It was rather rude, I'm afraid; but really I couldn't stand the old virago's abuse."

"Rude!" echoed his companion in a

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startled voice. "Why, good gracious, Dick! —they are prisoners! The door locks automatically, and, once closed, they will be unable to get out. It's a combination lock!"

"Phew!"

Dick Hamilton was a struggling author, and consequently a safe was a luxury not even dreamed of by him, and he was entirely ignorant of their peculiarities.

"What would the combination be like?" he asked helplessly.

"*I* don't know," said his sweetheart, bursting into tears. "I expect no one knows but Mr. Polson King, and, perhaps, the makers of the lock. Oh! what shall we do? Poor, *poor* Mr. King!"

"Serves the old beggar right!" said Hamilton viciously. "And his wife, too!

"Then, would it be 'Merivale,' I heard the old chap shouting, as I left the place? But I had no idea what he was driving at. I remember his voice had a curiously muffled sound," he added musingly.

"Yes, that's probably what he meant." And now you must go back and let them out."

"Look here, Ethel. I'll telephone to the nearest police-station and tell them what's wrong. They can then send an officer and release the amiable couple."

And this he accordingly did.

* * * * *

Mrs. Polson King had after a time calmed down sufficiently for the unlucky Josiah to make an attempt at an explanation.

For a quarter of an hour they waited for their release, expecting every minute to hear Hamilton return to set them free. And then, resigning himself to the inevitable, and satisfying his wife on the question of ventilation, the stockbroker lay down in a corner to await with patience the arrival of his clerks next morning, and soon fell asleep.

Not so his wife. Like a caged tigress she tramped up and down the narrow limits of their prison, her anger increasing as the lagging hours went by.

Then the Dragon let herself go.

It was nearly ten when at length the footsteps of an inspector of police accompanied by a constable sounded in the room outside; and, stepping cautiously to where her husband lay peacefully snoozing, the Dragon possessed herself of his stout walking-stick, and, grasping it firmly, took up her stand close to the door.

Ah! that impudent cyclist had returned at last! She would give him a warm reception when he came in. She would teach him to leave her—Mrs. Polson King—locked up for

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The unsuspecting Inspector entered, to be met with a perfect hail of blows over head and shoulders.

nearly four hours! Four hours—why, it seemed days.

The light of battle was in her eye. She set her teeth and grimly waited.

Someone fumbled with the lock with unaccustomed hand, the door was thrown open, and the unsuspecting Inspector entered, to be met with a perfect hail of blows over head and shoulders—blows laid on by a willing and thoroughly capable arm.

Drawing his staff, the P.C. gallantly rushed to the rescue, and evading, more by luck than calculation, the terrible sweeps of her weapon, got in a blow which effectually quieted the Dragon for a time; while the luckless stockbroker, roused by the din and coming to explain, was greeted with another, which sent him to join the others on the floor.

The policeman slowly struck a match and looked round. Then, his eye falling on the grim visage of the Dragon as, still clutching her stick, she lay prostrate and quiet on the floor, he gave a start of surprise. "By Gum!" he exclaimed—"A woman! Phew! Ain't she a 'oly terror?"

And one by one the sufferers opened their eyes and sat up.

* * * * *

His clerks spent a blissful week while Mr. Polson King was convalescing; while it was a month before the Dragon was out of the doctor's hands, and fully another month before she felt capable of assuming supreme command over her husband.

Her enforced seclusion, however, gave her time to think, and, it must be added, to be ashamed of her unjust suspicions. Anyhow, when Miss Hudson left the stockbroker's employment a couple of months later to marry the rising young author, Richard Hamilton, whose last book had proved an unqualified success, not the least among the many presents received by the happy pair was a silver coffee service from the bride's late employer, the card accompanying the gift being inscribed in the Dragon's own handwriting: "With best wishes from Mr. and Mrs. Polson King."

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Real Life Romances.

True Happenings are Acceptable for this Feature.

The Black Butterfly.

A JAPANESE INCIDENT.

THIRTY-FOUR years ago the house of one Tokeo Hirose, was gay with flags. Large paper fish floated in the wind, and many pretty *mousmés* flitted about the garden, decked in their finest clothes.

Such rejoicing could have but one explanation in Tokyo. And all who saw nodded their heads and said: "Surely a son is born at last to Tokeo Hirose, for, see, he flies a carp at every masthead."

A few weeks later the same house was again decorated, and everyone knew that on that day the son of Tokeo Hirose would be "christened."

After the ceremony the little baby was laid in his cot, basking under the name of his father, Tokeo Hirose.

As the guests and relations gathered around the cradle to look at the tiny infant whose birth had occasioned so much rejoicing, a great, black butterfly sailed into the room. Round and round, over the heads of all it circled, seemingly seeking some place on which to alight.

Those near stood spell-bound, wondering what the black butterfly was seeking. Presently it hovered over the cot, then, dropping suddenly, alighted on the chubby fist of little Tokeo.

Everyone now pressed forward to gain a closer glimpse of the strange insect. None spoke, but all wondered what the incident could portend.

At last the nurse looked up and smiled.

"What does it signify?" they asked her eagerly, for she was well versed in such mysteries.

"Oh! 'tis a lucky omen for my young master," the woman answered. "The spirit of his warrior grandfather has entered into the black butterfly. It has come to tell him that he, too, will die, fighting for his country."

* * * * *

Thirty-four years had passed since the black butterfly settled on the hand of the baby, Tokeo Hirose.

An old woman, bent and wrinkled, walked slowly down a narrow street in Tokyo. As she moved along, the sound of shouting reached her ears. There was so much more shouting in the streets now the terrible war was raging.

"Why do they shout?" she inquired of a rikshaboy.

"They shout because news has come of a great victory," the rikshaboy replied. "But, alas! bad news has also come. We have lost another ship."

The old woman's face paled.

"A ship lost!" she gasped. "What name did she bear?"

"She is not a very big one, mother," the man answered. "It is the *Asahi*. She was blown up by a mine or torpedo. But, alas, her brave captain, Commander Tokeo Hirose, is lost with her. May all the gods of our illustrious ancestors strike Russia!"

The old woman buried her wrinkled face in her long sleeves, and wept bitterly.

"I knew it!" she wailed. "I knew that he would die fighting for his country. And I said it, too, on the day that the black butterfly alighted on my dear master's hand!"

A great black butterfly sailed into the room.

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Slipping the letter up her sleeve, Evelyn set out to the post-office.

The Lost Letter.

A CURIOUS COINCIDENCE.

EVELYN felt much perplexed. Why she should was not difficult to understand. Evelyn had known George W—— for more than a year. Wherever she went, whether for a ride on her bicycle, or for a game of tennis down at the club, George would invariably present himself.

So it happened one day, whilst they were out riding together, that he tried to navigate the conversation into a certain channel that was uppermost in his thoughts. But Evelyn chose to talk of everything except that one particular subject.

No doubt if the same scene had been enacted eight weeks before, George would have succeeded. But, alas! someone else now occupied a place in Evelyn's thoughts.

This was Harold D——. And it was entirely because of him that Evelyn felt so very much perplexed. Two days previously he had asked her a most important question. She would have answered at once, but then—there was George!

So she demurred, and told Harold that she would give an answer within a couple of days. And now the second day had dwindled into late afternoon.

Presently she looked at her watch—only half-an-hour before the post went. The letter must be written.

A busy, golden head bent over paper, and after much scribbling, tearing up, and rewriting, the letter was penned.

Hastily pinning on her hat, and slipping the letter up her sleeve, Evelyn set out to the post-office. The way led past the house where the now rejected—and soon would be dejected—George lived.

As she hurried past the door, thoughts of him would keep mixing themselves up with those of Harold, and it was with a feeling of relief that she entered the post-office. Having asked for a stamp, Evelyn felt in her pocket for the money and the letter. The penny she found, but——not the letter.

Then she remembered having tucked it into her sleeve. But a quick examination revealed nothing to be there.

Was ever maid in such a fix? Only five minutes remained before the last post left that would reach Harold that night.

* * * * *

A sad little girl spent a very long evening gazing pensively into the fire. Of course, she would write again. But to lose that letter of all things——

A ring came from the front door bell. A well-known voice caught her ears. Hastily drying her eyes, she sprang to her feet and rushed into the outstretched arms of—Harold.

"Oh," she cried, "you must have thought it cruel of me never to write!"

"But you did write," he answered, holding up the missing letter.

Evelyn looked at the slightly mud-stained envelope. Then a sudden blush suffused her face. For on the back of the envelope, written in a well-remembered hand, she read:

This letter was evidently lost outside my door. I posted it immediately I found it.—GEORGE W.

"George!" she exclaimed in confusion.

"I should like to shake him by the hand and tell him what a good turn he has done me!" cried Harold enthusiastically.

Evelyn looked down at the carpet.

"I think you had better not," she said.

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Dolly's Clothes.

A STORY OF TWO SMALL CHILDREN.

BERTHA considered in private that Dolly belonged to her. Rose, likewise in private, was of the opinion that Dolly was hers entirely.

Dolly was all and everything to these poor little girls. What mattered it to them if their clothes were ragged and their little shoes soleless, so long as Dolly was well clothed?

Young as they were, they knew that their mother looked after them as far as she could afford. But then, poor mother could not possibly include Dolly in the family.

So Dolly had only themselves to depend on. And Dolly wanted a new dress for Christmas. And where Dolly was to get a dress from Bertha and Rose had not the least idea.

"Dolly will catch cold," said Bertha, sadly.

"Poor Dolly!" lisped her little sister. "She is so cold."

"Dolly must have a warmer dress for Christmas," Bertha remarked, as they walked along Sixty-fourth Street, New York.

Just then both little girls caught sight of something that very nearly took their breath away.

"Look!" cried Bertha. "Oh, look! Clothes for Dolly!"

"But they are not ours; we can't touch them," said Rose, eyeing longingly a clothes-line upon which a baby's robe and bonnet hung swaying in the wind.

"They are not for ourselves, stupid!" said Bertha in a superior voice. "They're for Dolly, so it's not stealing."

Having thus soothed their consciences, Bertha climbed over the fence, and returned triumphantly with the small, coveted garments.

Then both little girls fled as fast as their small feet and the heavy doll would permit.

But someone had seen—and that someone was a policeman.

The very next day two tiny girls stood in the New York Children's Court, taking it in turn to nurse a big china doll.

Stealing baby clothes from a clothes line was the terrible charge brought against them.

"What is this, little girls?" inquired the magistrate.

"Mister Judge," said Bertha, "do you know Santa Claus?"

"Yes, certainly," replied the magistrate smiling; "what about Santa Claus?"

Then Rose looked up and burst forth:

"We have a big doll, Mister Judge, a real nice doll, and she wants a new dress for Christmas."

"Mister Judge," cried Bertha impetuously, "you don't want Dolly to freeze? Yes, we did take the baby clothes from the line, and we were going to put them on Dolly and tell her that Santa Claus brought them for her. Don't you see, Mister Judge, that we did nothing wrong?"

Well, with such an eloquent defence, no judge in the world could convict. So the magistrate made them promise never to steal again, and having done so, let them go.

But even though Dolly did lose the clothes, she was not allowed to freeze. For two days afterwards a big parcel was left, marked "For Bertha and Rose, from Santa Claus."

Inside it the delighted little girls found a lovely robe for Dolly, and two dresses and two pairs of boots for themselves.

And some think that Santa Claus was disguised as a magistrate when Bertha and Rose stood in the New York Children's Court.

Bertha climbed over the fence.

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Heavens! what was this he saw?

An Esquimau Elopement.

A NORTHERN LOVE STORY.

HE was a young Esquimau, and, being an Esquimau, he hunted and caught fish for a living. His home, a small hut, covered with skins, lay on an ice-floe. Close by, and separated entirely except for a narrow ice-bridge, lay a very large floe. This belonged to a little old Esquimau, that rumour reported to be worth more fish-hooks than any dozen of his neighbours.

The young seal-hunter was well aware of this, but to him what was of vastly more importance, he also knew that the little old man possessed a very pretty daughter.

Such a beautiful creature she was, with eyes as dark as those of any seal, and a wealth of long, straight hair.

Now, it is not so easy as one might suppose to tell if an Esquimau girl is pretty or not. Old men, young men, pretty girls, ugly girls, all look alike in their thick skin suits and hoods. But it chanced one day that the seal-hunter had seen the maid with her hood thrown back. Then she had smiled at him, and he, in his turn, had smiled at her.

So the very next day they went fishing together. And as they sat on the edge of the floe, each holding a fishing-line in one hand, and the other's hand in the other, the young Esquimau asked the maid to become his wife.

That evening the seal-hunter besought the old Esquimau for his daughter's hand. But when the old man heard he shook with rage, and, casting his fish-hooks aside, he ordered the hunter to leave the hut, and never set foot therein again.

Burning with rage, the young Esquimau returned to his hut. That night, as he squatted by his fire, he conceived a plan.

It happened that a few days before the ice-bridge which connected the floes had broken away but for a very narrow space. A few blows of the axe would free it. Then the floe would drift out to sea far beyond the reach of anyone.

Forthwith the seal-hunter set about collecting blubber and catching fish. A fortnight's hard work, and he had stored provisions sufficient to last *two* people six months.

Everything was now ready. Late that night he sallied out. Crossing the ice-bridge, he crept towards the old man's hut. The door was closed. Drawing his knife, he cut a hole through one side of the hut big enough to squeeze through.

Once inside, he softly crept to where he knew his beloved one lay.

A moment later and he had caught her up in his arms, and was flying over the crisp snow.

Behind he could hear shouts. The old man was pursuing. But what cared he now? And the seal-hunter laughed as he rushed over the ice-bridge on to his own floe.

Gently laying the still little figure in the snow, he drew his axe, and with a few swift blows cut away the bridge.

As the floe drifted off, the moon beamed out from a bank of clouds, lighting up the skin-clad figure of his young bride. Laughing in triumph, the seal-hunter rushed to her side, pulled back the large hood, and gazed into the lovely——

Heavens! What was this he saw?

He staggered. Lovely! No, hideous!

A young girl! No! A hideous old man!

Of all misfortunes this was the worst. He had eloped with his intended father-in-law.

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Locked In.

A CHRISTMAS DAY EXPERIENCE.

I DO not remember ever looking forward to a day so much as I did to Christmas, 1903. To begin, there were several reasons why I should do so. In the first place, Christmas Day is my birthday. Moreover, that year it was to be my wedding day. And, in addition to all this, it would be the first holiday that I had taken for twenty-three years.

My duties kept me at work right through the night of Christmas Eve, and it was half-past eight on the great day before I found myself free.

Hurrying home, I had just time to wash—no time to change—snatch up my letters, and fly off to the church.

Besides being an engine-driver, I am a bell-ringer, and it was my duty to ring the bell for Christmas morning service. When the service began, not wishing to appear in church in my working clothes, I determined to remain in the belfry until it was over.

Up there it felt very lonely and rather cold. Perhaps my hard all-night work had something to do with it. But presently I fell asleep.

How long I dozed I cannot say, but when I awoke, the silence around made me realise that service was ended.

Down the belfry steps I rushed into the body of the church. Not a soul was there. I glanced at my watch—a quarter to two! Good gracious! In another fifteen minutes I ought to be standing at the altar rail of a little church ten miles distant!

Up the church I hastened, trying each door, examining each window, hoping to find some outlet by which I could escape. All in vain! The windows were of the old-fashioned type, small and fixed on to an iron frame.

"Well, it was all over with my wedding. By now my poor little bride would be standing, waiting for me, in that tiny kirk on the Scotch border. Ten minutes more, and she would believe that her lover had deserted her.

These thoughts were not comforting, so climbing on to the window ledge I looked out. Not a soul was in sight, and well I knew how unlikely it was that one would pass the lonely church on Christmas Day.

Night stole on. I descended from the ledge, cold and hungry, and groped my way to a pew, stretching myself on the cushioned seat, and endeavoured to sleep. At times I dozed, only to awaken, filled with terror, imagining strange forms to be stealing towards me from every quarter of the church.

With the first gleam of daylight I left my hard couch, and for a time paced quickly up and down the church. Turning into the vestry my eyes fell upon a banner. I opened a window and pushed it out, thinking it might attract someone to my aid.

Another hour went by, in which I sat watching the stained-glass windows gradually assume their brilliant colours.

Then a key grated in a lock. My banner had been seen! Relief had come! I rushed to the west door, and almost into the arms of the sexton.

* * * * *

"But why did you not ring the bell?" he inquired when I had told my story.

Strange as it might seem, during my twenty-four hours' imprisonment this thought had never occurred to me.

But what did it matter? I was married three days later.

Down the belfry steps I rushed.

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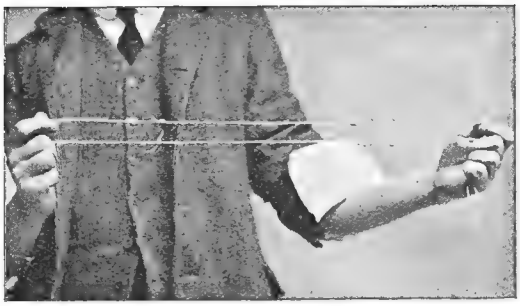

THE JOINED STRING TRICK.—(1) One of the pieces of string has real knots in it; in the other the knots are imitations.

(2) Showing the string with the imitation knots concealed in the conjurer's left hand, ready to be substituted for the genuinely joined string.

(3) Removing the knots. In reality the conjurer is merely untying the two little spare pieces of string, comprising the imitation knots.

(4) An exposed view, showing how simple the trick is. The two little pieces of string are, of course, concealed in the hand when the trick is being performed.

AFTER DINNER TRICKS

Some Clever Tricks that Require Little Apparatus Described by England's Most Famous Conjurer.

DAVID DEVANT.

BEING a conjurer, I am inclined to believe that the performance of a few conjuring tricks makes the best of entertainments for a Christmas gathering. Those who agree with me, and who wish to learn how to perform some interesting tricks with the least possible trouble and expense to themselves, will, I hope, gain a few hints from this article.

To begin with, the conjurer takes from his pocket a piece of string about a yard long. He openly cuts this twice, making three pieces of equal length. He next ties these pieces together, and lets two of the audience hold the ends, or he may tie them to two chairs. The conjurer then throws handkerchiefs over the two knots, places his hand on them for a second, whisks the handkerchiefs away, disclosing the string whole and free from knots.

The secret of this trick lies in the fact that another piece of string was substituted for the piece that had been cut and joined. Concealed in his left pocket the conjurer had a piece of string similar in length, whole, but knotted to give the appearance of having been cut. To do this, fold the string into three pieces of equal length, then take two short pieces of string, and tie one piece tightly at the first bend, and the other piece at the second. A string treated thus looks as if it had been cut and knotted together again.

And now to do the trick. Previously placing the prepared string in his left trousers pocket, the conjurer asks one of the audience to join the piece that he has cut into three equal lengths.

"Join them with a granny knot," he suggests casually. His reason for saying this is that in a granny knot—a knot made simply by tying the ends of the string round each other—the ends stick out, and

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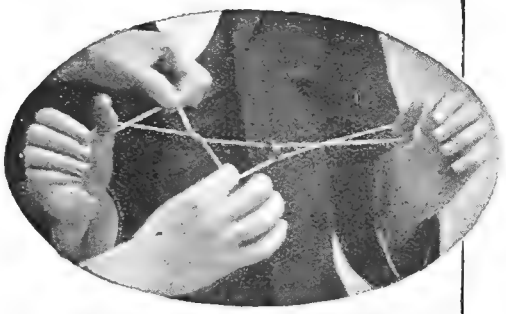
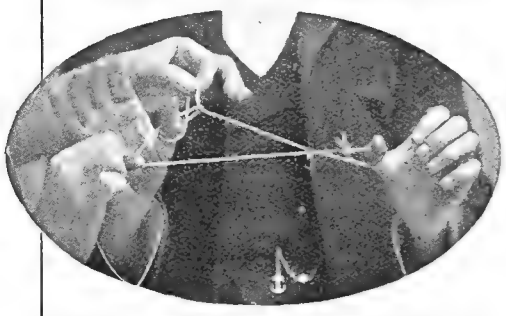
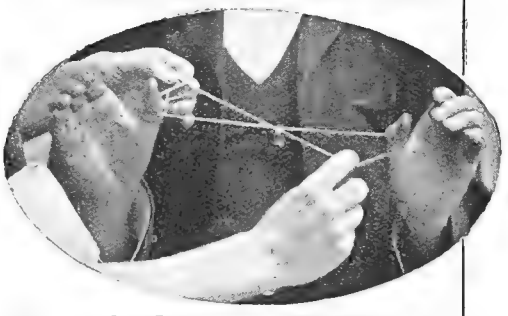
THE RING AND STRING TRICK.—(1) Approaching his assistant, the conjurer takes hold of the string furthest away from him with the *right* hand, and the string nearest to him with the *left*.



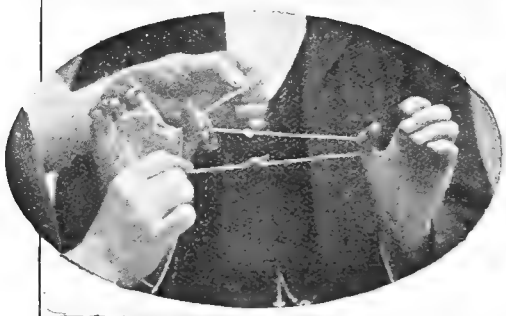
(2) The right hand is then moved towards the body, and the left hand away from it, thus crossing the strings.



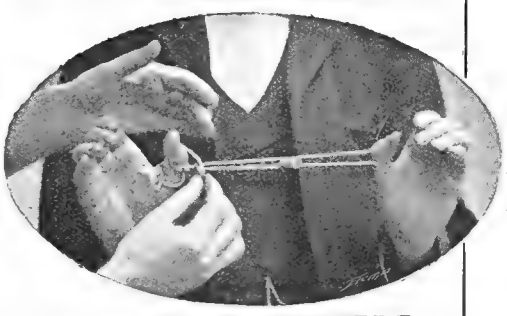
(3) The string held by the right hand is then passed over the assistant's thumb, nearest the conjurer's left hand. His left hand still retains the other piece of string.



(4) The conjurer then moves his right hand down the string, past the ring, and past the point where the strings cross each other.



(5) Taking hold of the string nearest to him, he passes it over the thumb nearest to his left hand, *i.e.*, the right thumb of the person holding the string.



(6) The left hand then releases the piece it held in the first place, and the ring slips off. In performing the trick the conjurer should cover the ring with his right hand

thus resemble most closely the imitation knots on the piece of string in his pocket.

When the second knot is tied the conjurer remarks: "You've left the ends rather long. I will clip them a bit." Saying this, he feels in his left trousers pocket for a knife, incidentally drawing out and concealing in the palm of his hand the prepared piece of string. Now anyone can see that it is not a very difficult matter for the conjurer to substitute the string while he is trimming the knots.

The prepared piece of string, which everyone imagines to be the piece they have just seen knotted, is now held at each end by one of the audience.

"I am going to cover these knots with

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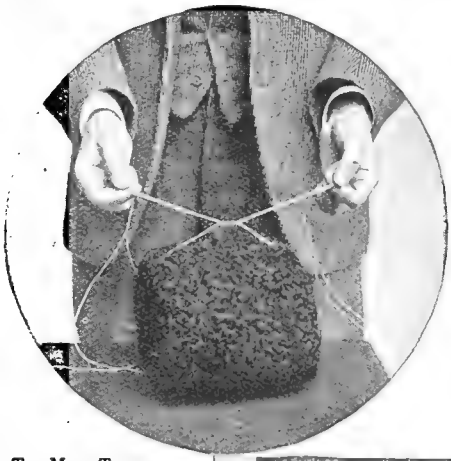
two nandkerchiefs," says tne conjurer. Here he puts his hand in his pocket, takes out a handkerchief, at the same time depositing



THE MUFF TRICK.—(1) The strings are tied on to the muff.

there the genuinely cut and knotted string.

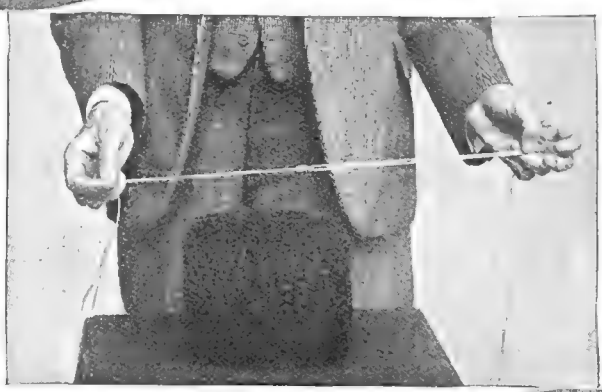
Having borrowed the second handkerchief, the conjurer covers over the imitation knots. He then puts his hands underneath them and unties the imitation knots, removes the little spare pieces of string, and conceals them in his hand. A whisk of the handkerchiefs, and the string is disclosed whole, and free from knots.

The next trick requires a piece of string a yard long, with the two ends tied together, and a small finger ring.

The ring is slipped on to the string, which is then held out by one of the audience putting his thumbs in the loop and drawing it out taut.

"Now," says the conjurer, "my trick is to take the ring from the string without removing the string from this gentleman's thumbs."

The conjurer takes care that there is no twist in the loop of string, which should be so held that, if necessary, a sheet of paper could be laid on it. (When the accompanying photographs were taken the hands holding the string were slightly tilted, so that good pictures could be taken.) The conjurer approaches the string from the top, and faces the person who is holding it. Using his thumbs and first fingers the conjurer takes hold of each side of the loop near the thumb which is on his left side. The string farthest away from him is held by the right hand, the string nearest to him by the left hand. The right hand is then moved towards the body, and the left hand away from it, thus crossing the strings. The piece held by the right hand is then passed over the thumb near the conjurer's left hand. His left hand retains the other piece of string between the thumb and first finger. The conjurer must then let his right hand travel down beyond the ring, and beyond where the strings cross each other.



(2) The secret of the whole trick. Notice that the two pieces are really folded separately in half and then joined in the centre by the ring. The ring is afterwards removed under cover of the coat and muff.

He next takes hold of the string nearest to him, and passes it over the thumb near his left hand—that is to say, the right thumb of the person holding the string.

The trick is now practically done, for all

(3) The various objects are really tied on to the muff. The process of untying the knots and releasing the articles is very simple.

that the performer has to do is to release the string held by his left hand, and pull the ring

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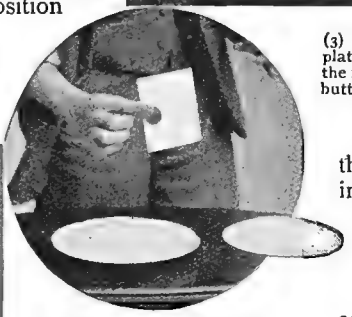
THE ENVELOPE AND PENNY TRICK.—(1) Folding the penny in the paper. Notice that the paper is not folded exactly in half.

(2) The right hand taps the paper on the table to show that the penny is still there. This done, the left hand grasps the paper, and so allows the penny to slip out into the right hand.

down the string and away. It would be a mistake of "showmanship," however, to do this either very quickly or openly. Directly the conjurer has passed the string over the thumb the second time, and before he releases the piece held by the left thumb and first finger, he should hold his hand over the ring and over the piece of the string held by his left hand. He should then release the left hand, slide the ring quickly down the string and back again, when the string on the thumbs will appear to be exactly in the same position that it was in the first instance.

The next trick is a great favourite with conjurers who perform on racecourses, but I alter their version

(3) Cover the paper with the plate; while doing so move the right hand to the waistcoat button and take the little piece of wax stuck thereon.



(4) An exposed view of the trick, showing how the penny is attached to the envelope by means of the wax. This movement must be hidden from the audience.

(5) Lifting up the plate—shown in the third illustration on this page—the conjurer takes the packet, supposed by the audience to contain the penny, and tears it up. He then points to the envelope to show that the penny is there. As a matter of fact the coin is fixed behind the envelope.

(6) Another exposed view. The conjurer appears to take the penny out of the envelope. In reality he opens the envelope with his first finger, and slides the penny up with his second finger.

of it to make it more easy.

This is what apparently happens. The conjurer takes two pieces of string—about three yards long. (It will be noticed that I am describing tricks which a man can easily put in his pocket when going out to dinner.) He passes these strings round for examination, and then asks a lady to lend him a muff. He gives the ends of the strings to someone to hold. Following this, the conjurer passes the strings through the muff, and openly ties them together by making two or three knots.

The next move is to borrow sundry small articles from the audience, such as keys, rings, and watches, and to tie these on outside the muff.

The conjurer now asks the ladies' permission to remove his coat, or he may go out into the hall and borrow an overcoat. He holds the coat up with the lining facing himself, and places it over the muff. Then he draws one set of ends of the two strings through one sleeve and one set through the other.

At this stage of the trick he invites another

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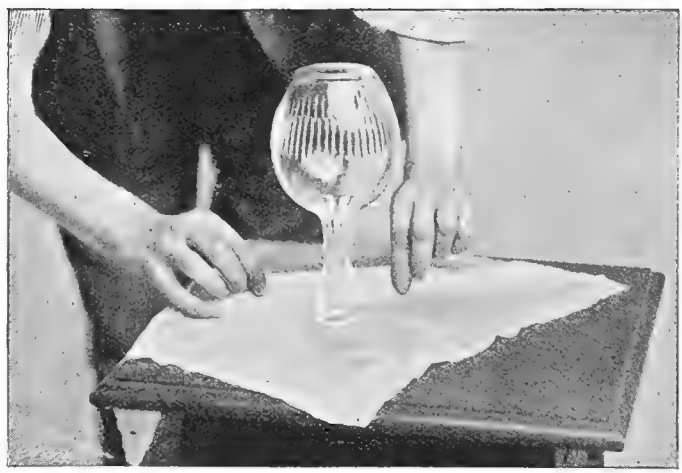
member of the audience to come and help him by holding his (the conjurer's) ends of the strings. He next requests the person on his left to give him one of the two pieces of string he is holding.

"And now you, if you please," says the conjurer. Turning to the man on his right who is holding the other two ends of string, the conjurer takes the two pieces of string handed to him, ties them once over the coat, and hands them back again. By this last tie he has drawn the coat into a bundle tightly over the muff, and the other articles tied to it.

Placing his hands under the coat, the conjurer removes the muff and other articles.

"Now we come to the coat," he says. "In order that there may be no mishap to the coat, I should like my two assistants here to pull on the strings when I say 'Go,' and not before. Are you ready? Go!"

With this the conjurer twists the coat once round the string, and it then drops on the floor, although the strings are still being held by the two members of the audience.



THE DECANTER TRICK.—Showing how the handkerchief is removed without upsetting the decanter.

The secret of this very effective little trick lies in the fact that the conjurer has a little piece—about an inch—of soft copper wire in the hip pocket of his trousers. While someone in the audience was examining the strings he got this little piece of wire out and concealed it in his left hand. When he gave the two ends of the strings to someone to hold and to pull on—to assure himself that they were genuine—he pulled on the other ends of the strings himself with his right hand, and closed his left hand, which contained the little piece of wire, over the strings.

The wire, being thus bent, was roughly in the form of a ring, but with the two ends not quite closed. Running his right hand down the strings, the conjurer took with it this rough ring. The right hand came to a stop when about half way down the strings, and, the hand being clenched, the wire was closed round the strings.

While someone had gone out of the room for the muff, the conjurer had ample opportunities for slipping his forefinger between the two strings on one side of the ring and his thumb between the two pieces on the other. By giving the strings a shake this movement would be quite imperceptible.

The reader, who is following me with strings and ring in hand, will see that the trick is now to all intents and purposes done, for when the conjurer hands what are apparently the ends of the two strings to the first assistant, he really hands the two ends of one piece.

In the same way the two ends of the other piece of string were handed to the second assistant. The second two ends must not be given up till the strings have been passed through the muff. If the conjurer wishes, he may pass them through before handing the first two ends away.

It will be seen that the strings are separated, but are temporarily joined together by the ring in the centre which is concealed by the muff.

The conjurer should tie the first knot over the muff himself. If some very officious member of the audience did so he might possibly pull so hard as to undo the ring. After the first knot has been tied, no amount of pulling will have this effect.

A word as to the tying of the strings across the coat. The two assistants are really allowed to have free choice as to which string they hand to the conjurer, but the conjurer must remember to tie only a single knot, and to hand back to the man on his left the end which he took from the man on his right, and *vice versâ*.

When the conjurer puts his hands under

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the coat, he unbends the ring, but prevents the two strings from pulling outwards by putting his thumb and first finger through the loops he will find there. It is then an easy matter to untie the remaining articles under the cover of the coat; but when they are all removed, the conjurer must still retain hold of the two strings.

Telling his assistants to pull hard, he releases the strings and at the same time turns the coat quickly over, so that no one may see exactly how it was magically removed from the strings. The little ring is slipped into the waistcoat pocket while the articles are being removed from the muff.

Tricks with coins are usually acceptable, especially when no apparatus is used.

Let the conjurer borrow a penny and have it marked. He then takes a piece of note-paper from his pocket, wraps the penny in it, and puts it under a plate.

Having shown an empty unused envelope, he moistens the gummed edge, closes the envelope, and places it under a plate at the other end of the table.

"Now," says the conjurer, "my trick is to make the penny which you have seen wrapped in the piece of paper disappear and find its way into the closed envelope."

Here I may give a little hint. Never announce what you are going to do in a conjuring performance until you have really done it, and not always then.

The conjurer takes up the first plate, and tears the piece of paper in pieces, showing that the penny has vanished.

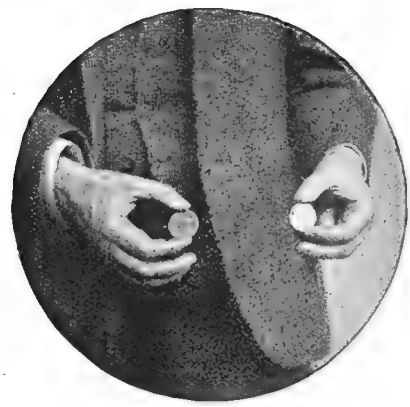
He then lifts the second plate, and, picking up the envelope with the first finger and thumb, holds it up to the light so that all may see that the penny is really there.

After this, he opens the envelope, takes out the penny, and hands it back to the person from whom he borrowed it. The penny is identified as being the one lent in the first instance.

The conjurer must first learn how to fold a penny in a piece of paper in such a way that the coin will slip out of the paper into his hand, although such a thing appears to be impossible.

Place the coin flat on a piece of paper. Hold it there with the thumb on top, and then fold the bottom half of the paper over the coin.

As a matter of fact, however, the conjurer must not fold quite half of the paper upwards. The piece so folded should be about an inch and a half shorter than the piece facing the audience.



A Good Penny Trick.—(1) One hand holds a penny, the other a small glass disc. In the performance the disc is hidden.

(2) An exposed view. After the penny—in reality the disc—is dropped into the water, the conjurer shows that it is apparently at the bottom of the glass. He does this by placing the bottom of the glass exactly over the penny.

(3) The conjurer then takes up the paper parcel, tears it open, and reveals the coin. The envelope with another penny inside it, is, of course, prepared beforehand.

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Then he folds the right-hand side of the paper away from him, and keeps his first finger over the break between the two ends of the paper. He does the same thing when he folds over the left-hand side of the paper.

The paper is now in the form of a little parcel, wanting only the top to be folded down to make it complete. The conjurer closes the top by folding it away from him towards the audience. It will be seen that the paper, though apparently folded fairly, really has a little pocket containing the coin at the back of it. The conjurer taps the paper containing the coin on the table to prove to everyone, by the ring of the coin, that the penny is really there. He then grasps the paper at the bottom with his left hand, and in doing so allows the penny to slide out into his right hand.

While the paper that apparently contains the coin is being placed by the left hand under the plate, the conjurer's right hand, which contains the penny, goes towards the bottom button of his waistcoat. Underneath this button is a small piece of conjurer's wax. Beeswax softened with a little Venice turpentine answers the purpose. He gets the wax on to the nail of his middle finger and presses it on the penny in his hand. When he picks up the envelope and closes it, he presses the waxed side of the penny on the flap side of the envelope. The conjurer can then pass the envelope from hand to hand and show incidentally that his hands are empty.

In showing the trick the conjurer first tears up the piece of paper which is supposed to contain the penny, and then holds the envelope up to the light. Opening the flap of the envelope with his first finger, he puts his second finger down and slides the penny upwards, thus apparently taking it out of the envelope.

My next is more of a puzzle than a trick, but it usually affords some little amusement. Turning back the cloth on the table the conjurer spreads a handkerchief on it and then stands an empty decanter upside down on the handkerchief. The trick is to remove the handkerchief without touching the decanter or upsetting it.

To begin with, the decanter must be perfectly dry, and the trick is easiest when a silk handkerchief is used. If no silk handkerchief is conveniently at hand, borrow the finest handkerchief in the room. The trick is done by grasping the handkerchief with the first fingers and thumbs about a couple of inches from the decanter, and then pulling gently, but with a series of short, sharp jerks. When the piece of handkerchief first taken up has become slack (because the piece under the decanter has been pulled away) the handkerchief must be again grasped near the decanter and the operation repeated.

I will close with a good penny trick. The conjurer first shows a piece of paper, and either crumples into a ball or makes a little parcel of it. He then borrows a penny, or takes one from his pocket, throws a handkerchief over it, and asks someone to hold it. Holding a champagne tumbler half-full of water under the handkerchief, the conjurer asks his assistant to drop a penny into the water. The splash is distinctly heard.

"Did you hear it go?" asks the conjurer. The reply will naturally be, "Yes."

"Of course you did," says the conjurer. "You can see it's in the water."

He takes the handkerchief away, and shows that the penny is apparently in the water. Covering the glass again with the handkerchief, he returns it to his assistant. The conjurer then goes to the table on which the ball of paper—or paper parcel—had been placed.

"I shall waste no time on this trick," says the conjurer. Breaking the parcel or ball of paper in half, he shows the penny, and on the assistant taking the handkerchief away from the glass he finds that the penny has gone.

To perform this trick the conjurer has a little glass disc—a watch-glass or an eyeglass will do—concealed in his left hand. When he apparently puts the penny under the handkerchief, he really puts the glass there, and it is the glass which the assistant holds and drops into the water. It is, of course, invisible when in the water. The conjurer shows that the penny is apparently really in the water by passing the glass to his left hand, and immediately over the penny. When the assistant has satisfied himself that the penny is in the water, the conjurer covers the glass tumbler with the handkerchief again, and returns it to the assistant, but this time the performer retains the penny in his hand, and slips it into his left-hand trousers pocket as he turns towards his table.

The paper is not really a single piece of paper, but two pieces of the same size, neatly joined together at the edges. Before they are fastened a penny is slipped between them. The paper should be fairly thick, otherwise the presence of the penny may be betrayed when the paper is held up in the first instance. Of course, when the paper parcel or paper ball is torn open, the penny is at once seen. The torn paper must be pocketed or burnt.

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THE ESCAPE OF SANTA CLAUS.

A Christmas Story.

By Geo. A. Best.

In one of the back rooms of a lonely wayside cottage, which had been tenantless for many months, a coarse-featured man was engaged in transferring sundry articles of wearing apparel from a large bag which lay open on the dusty floor.

The wind came in fierce gusts through the broken panes of a dilapidated casement, and ghostly shadows moved weirdly along the walls at the will of a guttering candle which stood on the rusty iron mantel.

The man paused for a moment to glance nervously at the swiftly moving shadows.

"This is what some folks call a good old-fashioned Christmas Eve," he remarked, "but I reckon that, with these lonesome surroundings, it's a bit too 'old-fashioned' for my likin'."

Having apparently relieved his mind by this brief soliloquy, the speaker turned once more to the opened bag.

"Nothing forgot, I hope," he continued, running rapidly over the contents. "Here's the pot o' grease-paint to make my cheeks look rosy, an' here's the hood an' cloak which I 'borrowed' from the Southgate Monastery; an' there's half-a-yard o' white beard done up in this paper bag, an' a dozen penny toys in the box at the bottom, together with a few other playthings known to the profession as jemmies an' picks. I wonder what the mob'll say when I tell 'em that I dressed up as Old Father Christmas on purpose to avoid scarin' the innercents while their pa an' ma was out enjoyin' themselves at a Christmas Eve party a mile or so down the road? It's a noble idea, any way, an' I've even bought a chice selection of tin trumpets an' dolls, so's the little 'uns shan't be disappointed when they wake up an' see me at the bedside. I've bin a fam'ly man myself, an' that's a great advantage in a delikit job of this sort."

"Santa Claus" well maintained his reputation for rapidity of movement on this particular Christmas Eve. He dressed quickly by the uncertain light, and when the last touch had been given to an abnormally ruddy complexion, the artist grinned hideously for a moment at his reflection in the window pane. Apparently well satisfied with the result, he carefully extinguished the candle and made his way out of the crazy tenement by the back door. Passing through the weed-grown garden, he climbed the low boundary fence; and, avoiding the turnpike, ran noiselessly over the thawing meadow land in the direction of an isolated villa residence, which lay back some fifty yards from the roadway.

A broad beam of white light, which escaped from one of the windows on the ground floor, and a similar ray emanating from an ivy framed casement in the second storey, served to guide the burglar through the thickly planted shrubbery; the remainder of the building lay in deep shadow.

The man crept cautiously towards the brilliantly illuminated casement on the ground floor, and peered through the space left by a carelessly drawn blind.

"Enjoyin' themselves as only servants can when the missus is otherwise engaged," he muttered with a broad grin. "Dancin' themselves paralytic, an' no one to watch the performance but a ginger-'eaded policeman from the village! It's plain to see that the housemaid, Mary Jane, is playin' up to that copper for all she's worth. There's a hussy for you! Told me a few nights ago that she couldn't abide country chaps, an' that she'd

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never even looked at a man except me an' her own father. She told me a few other secrets besides—said that the missus an' master was goin' out to spend Christmas Eve at Colonel Crumpet's, but I couldn't get any sort of information respecting the family jewels. I'm dependin' on the children for that. 'Santa Claus has got a present for dear mamma which he wants to put away among the other pretty things which she keeps locked up.' That's the idea. Won't ma be pleased!"

"Santa Claus" sighed regretfully as he left the window.

"The sight of a little entertainment like that puts one off business," he commented wearily. "I'm beginnin' to feel Christmassy. The next move is to find a ladder an' get indoors."

* * * * *

"Wake up, Gladys! Someone's opening the window!"

Gladys sat up in bed and rubbed her eyes.

"'Spect it's Santa Claus, Sis," she said sleepily. "Let's wake Bertram."

Bertram was already awake.

"Keep very quiet, you girls, or he'll go back," he whispered excitedly.

"No, I shan't," said Santa Claus, stepping somewhat heavily into the room. "Not till I've left my presents, my dears."

Sis gave vent to a suppressed scream, and hid her face beneath the bed clothes.

"Oh, what an ugly Santa Claus!" exclaimed Gladys, in a tone of deep disappointment.

Father Christmas grinned reassuringly.

"I'm all right when you know me," he said, with a hideous wink. "I wish you all a merry Christmas an' a 'appy new 'ear."

"We don't want new 'ears," said Bertram bluntly. "Have you brought my rocking-horse?"

"Rockin' 'orse? No, I haven't got no rockin' 'orses," answered Santa Claus slowly "They're very dangerous toys. I knew a little boy like you wot broke 'is neck fallin' off a rockin' 'orse; an' 'is baby brother died next day through suckin' the paint off of its neck."

"Well, where's the steam engine which I've asked for so many times?" asked Bertram impatiently.

"I never give steam ingines," answered the burglar. "Toy locomotives have killed more children than measles, as any doctor'll tell you if you ask 'im. The b'ilers bust as soon as you light 'em up. I knew a young feller once wot was blown clean——"

"Please don't tell us any more about accidents," interrupted Gladys nervously. "If you've got anything at all, please leave it, an' go away."

"If I've got anythink," exclaimed Santa Claus reproachfully. "Do you think I'd have taken the trouble to travel ten thousand miles empty 'anded. I've got a real Japanese dolly for you, my dear, an' a shell necklet for the other little gal; not forgetting the 'andsome tin trumpet for your brother."

"But I didn't want a tin trumpet," protested Bertram.

"And I hate Japanese dolls!" added Gladys emphatically. "They're ugly and common."

"Please give my shell necklet away to some other little girl," came in tremulous tones from beneath the bed clothes.

Santa Claus laid his despised presents on the counterpane.

"Well! of all the ungrateful kids I've ever come across!" he ejaculated, more in sorrow than in anger.

Bertram held up a chubby forefinger warningly.

"If you call us nasty, low names, I shall ring for Mary Jane," he announced, making a movement towards the bell-push.

"If you do that you'll lose all the other presents which I've hid away behind a gooseberry bush in the garding!" exclaimed Santa Claus hastily. "These little toys are only samples; there's more than a wagon-load below."

"Engines and rocking horses?" bargained Bertram imperiously.

"A toy train as big as yourself, an' a rockin' elephant four feet high wot can move its trunk," answered the burglar enthusiastically. "For the little girls I've got a whole street of doll's 'ouses, an' a toy pianner wot plays comic songs by clockwork."

The girls clapped their hands in an ecstacy of delight. Bertram jumped out of bed and ran to the open window.

"I can see the gooseberry bush," he announced, peering into the darkness, "but there isn't any heap of toys behind it."

"They're just round the corner," replied Santa Claus vaguely. "I'll bring 'em all up after I've left the beautiful di'mond brooch wot I've brought for your ma among the other pretty things which she keeps locked up. P'raps you could tell me where I can find the jewel case?"

"Have you really got a present for dear mother?" asked Sis shyly. "I didn't think that Santa Claus brought things for grown-up people."

"It's only a very few that I'm interested in,

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an' your dear ma is one of 'em," said Santa Claus truthfully. "I always put my presents for ladies in their own dressin' cases. It wouldn't do to leave a brooch worth somethin' like a million pounds lying on an ordinary bed, would it now?"

"But surely nobody would be so wicked as to steal things on Christmas Eve?" argued Gladys.

Santa Claus scratched his false wig doubtfully.

"Thieves have no consciences, my dear," he remarked slowly; "that's why I want to put the beautiful brooch under lock an' key before anybody——"

"Can you fly, Santa Claus?" interrupted Bertram from the window.

"Fly? Why, wot a question, to be sure!" ejaculated the burglar with a forced laugh. "Haven't I flown over ten thousand miles every Christmas Eve for six hundred years or more?"

"You might fly round the room, then, just for fun!" pleaded Gladys with a mischievous smile.

"I've no time to fly about for fun on Christmas Eve," said Santa Claus impatiently. "Besides, there isn't room in a small apartment like this. I should smash a lot of things if I tried."

"There's plenty of room outside, Santa Claus," answered Bertram cheerfully. "I've just been leaning out of the window and pushing the ladder out of the way. It was hard to move at first, but it's slid away along the wall quite out of reach now. So you'll be forced to fly down to the gooseberry bush and back again with the presents."

"Lordermighty!" he ejaculated feverishly.

Father Christmas ran to the window and leaned far out into the night. When he faced his highly interested audience again they noticed that the ruddy complexion had a decidedly streaky appearance. He was perspiring profusely.

"Lordermighty!" he ejaculated feverishly.

Gladys regarded the speaker with solemn, widely-opened eyes.

"Are you prayin', Santa Claus?" she asked earnestly.

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"Prayin'? Well, no, not exactly!" replied the burglar, mopping his forehead furiously with a dirty rag as he spoke. "I'm feelin' a bit upset, that's all!"

"Poor old Santa! P r'aps you'd like to sit down an' rest till dad comes home," said Sis sympathetically. "Won't you have a nice wash an' a clean handkerchief?" she continued, gazing askance at the grey patches which had appeared on the forehead of the visitor.

"There's a bottle of smellin' salts in mother's room," suggested Gladys. "They're very good for old gentlemen when they're feelin' a bit faint. Can you sniff smellin' salts without sneezin', Santa Claus?" she asked solemnly.

"I'll try, anyway," said Father Christmas, walking softly towards the door. "Where shall I find the salts?"

"They're in a red bottle with a gold top, just behind the jewel-case on mother's dressin' table," answered Gladys readily. "I don't think mother will mind you using them just once, if you are very careful to put the bottle back where you found it. An' you can leave the beautiful brooch there at the same time."

"I'm always wonderful careful with other people's property," said the burglar with his hand on the door knob. "If I borrow anythink you may be quite sure that it's goin' to be—Hallo! why whose bin lockin' the bedroom door?"

Bertram was apparently greatly amused at the highly excited tone in which Santa Claus framed the question.

"I locked the door myself, so that Mary Jane shouldn't come in an' touch the presents before we'd seen them," he answered delightfully. "Mary Jane said that there wasn't any such person as Santa Claus. 'It's only your dada who buys the toys an' leaves them on your bed when you're all asleep,' she said. So I just fastened the door an' threw the key out of the window to see whether Mary Jane was tellin' us fibs or not. An' now dada can't get in, an' Santa Claus can't get out," he concluded jubilantly.

"Only by flying out of the window," added Gladys, clapping her hands.

"I ain't a-goin' to fly for nobody!" exclaimed Santa Claus fiercely. "Wot next!"

"Nothing next—except the presents," said Gladys sweetly. "An' when dad comes back, he'll wish you a Merry Christmas an' invite you down to supper."

"I don't think he'll do either," remarked Santa Claus miserably.

"We've got a goose as big as you," announced Sis in an excited whisper.

"It must be a big 'un, then," commented the disconsolate visitor. "P'r'aps you've got an ass on the premises about the same size as me; if so I'd be glad to shake hands with it."

The children laughed hysterically.

"Say something else funny," said Sis gleefully.

The burglar made no audible reply to this request. He was attacking the lock with a queerly-fashioned tool which produced a sharp clicking sound as he deftly turned it to and fro. The children gathered around him and watched the operation with sympathetic interest.

"I hope you'll be able to get the door open for mother's sake, Santa Claus," said Gladys earnestly. "She'll be sorry if you go away, and we have to tell her what she has missed."

"She won't be 'alf as upset as I shall!" declared the burglar, dropping the pick and inserting a skeleton key in the lock. "That's better!" he continued as the lock yielded with a loud click. "I'll be back before you have time to wink, with a whole cartload of presents for each of you."

"Won't you show us mother's brooch before you go?" asked Sis coaxingly.

"Tell me exactly where the jewel-case is, an' I'll think about it," replied Santa Claus in an excited whisper.

"In the top drawer of the dressing chest—next room on the right," said Sis eagerly.

And without waiting to fulfil his part of the contract, Santa Claus passed noiselessly out into the corridor, locking the bedroom door behind him and removing the key.

While the children were waiting impatiently for the return of Santa Claus, Mary Jane knocked impatiently at the bedroom door. Her demand for admission was answered by a chorus of derisive laughter from within.

"You can't come in, Mary Jane, because Santa Claus has been with us, and now he's gone an' locked the door on the outside," shouted the boy.

"Such a funny Santa Claus," added Gladys. "He had a painted face and loose hair!"

"An' he climbed up a ladder, an' got in through the window," announced Sis.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the maid in a nervous tone. "What *are* you talking about?"

"The real Santa Claus, I tell you!" shrieked Bertram. "He's got a beautiful

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brooch for mother, worth a million pounds: an' he's been asking where the jewel-case is kept, so's he can put mother's present away with the other pretty things which she keeps locked up. Isn't it kind of him?"

"Where's the key?" shouted Mary Jane, shaking the door violently as she spoke.

"You'll find it in the garden, 'cos I threw it out of the window when I came to bed," answered Bertram. "It's near the gooseberry bush where the great heap of presents is. Or you can go into mother's bedroom and ask Santa Claus if he'll kindly lend you his private key for our room."

"Where is the burglar gone, my dears?" giggled the cook hysterically.

"'Eaven forbid!" ejaculated the maid piously. "Thank goodness we've got an officer of the lor on the premises; it's a mercy you're not all murdered in your beds!"

And having delivered herself of this sentiment, Mary Jane rushed downstairs like a whirlwind.

In the kitchen, the "officer of the law" was seated on the dresser, drumming a weird accompaniment with his heels to an elaborate vocal effort on the part of the cook.

"Thieves and murder—in the children's room!" announced the maid breathlessly. "Went up a ladder an' got in at the window—locked the door outside—wants the missus's jewels. He's upstairs now, waitin' for you behind the bedroom door. You will be careful, Peter darlin', for my sake," she added dramatically.

The constable adjusted his helmet with a great show of deliberation.

"It ain't like me to be extraordinary careful of my own person in a case of robbery with vi'lence," he answered slowly, "so I can't make no promises. Are the villains armed?"

"There's only one, an' he's got three pistols and a gun," answered Mary Jane drawing heavily upon her imagination. "An' he's sent all the poor children clean off of their 'eads through fright! They're deelereous, every one of 'em!"

"'Orrible!" commented the cook faintly. "'Opeless an' 'orrible!"

"You said thieves an' murder, but it appears that there's only one thief an' no murder!" said the policeman, speaking more hopefully. "Did I understand you to state that the alleged burglar was hiding in the children's bedroom?" he added in a ponderous, magisterial tone.

"Yes—I mean no—upstairs somewhere, if he hasn't gone," answered Mary Jane tearfully.

The policeman greeted this intelligent reply with a gesture of impatience.

"Now wot can I make of such conflictin' evidence as that?" he asked with sarcastic emphasis on the last word. "I'd better 'ear what the children 'ave to say before deciding upon a plan of campaign. I must ask both of you ladies to follow me upstairs in order to render such 'elp as I may require in the King's name; and, if necessary, to give evidence at the inquest to be held hereafter."

So the two maids silently climbed the heavily-carpeted staircase in the wake of the intrepid Peter, who brandished his truncheon with a remarkable show of reckless courage. His first blow on the panels of the door resounded through the house like a pistol-shot.

"Is there anyone within this room," he demanded with impressive ferocity.

"Only us," replied the children from inside.

"Where is the burglar gone, my dears?" giggled the cook hysterically.

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"There never was any burglar," answered Bertram indignantly.

"You hear that admission, ladies?" said the policeman eagerly. "It's all an 'oax, there never was no burglar!"

"If you mean old Santa Claus, he went into mother's bedroom twenty minutes ago," added the boy. "He said he'd be back with the presents before I could wink, and we've all been winkin' hard for ever so long to fetch him."

The policeman moved slowly down the corridor to the door of an adjoining chamber, Mary Jane and the cook following with clenched teeth and widely-dilated eyes.

"Is this the room in question?" asked the constable loudly.

"Yes, yes—in there," replied Mary Jane hoarsely. "Switch on the light, an' then jump back sharp in case he's behind the door."

Peter was much relieved to discover, after making a thorough and conscientious search of the apartment, that the burglar had made good his escape probably by way of the window, which was opened to the fullest extent. A drawer from the dressing chest had been forced open, and lay on the carpet in company with a false wig of unnaturally coarse, white hair. Pinned to the wig was a scrap of white paper, bearing the following message, hastily scrawled in lead pencil:

Santa Claus begs to thank his little friends (and the waterspout) for his escape from a very tight corner. A Merry Christmas to my Mary Jane and the ginger headed dummy, drest in a policeman's uniform, who is keeping her company downstairs. The swag is well worth the scare I got in the kid's bedroom. I hope that Ma will like her diamond brooch.

* * * * *

When "Santa Claus" was captured and brought to justice in the adjoining parish a few days later, a certain constable was warmly complimented by the magistrate for the intelligent way in which his evidence was given. But the note left behind by the prisoner was not "put in" with the other papers bearing upon the case, for reasons best known to the intelligent witness himself.

The Captive

Behind the prison bars she stood;
So young, so beautiful, so white.
I gazed into her eyes, nor could
Withdraw mine own at such a sight.

What heinous wrong could she have done?
What crime kept her a prisoner there?
She made no sound, as all alone
She stood—so young and oh, so fair!

A wave of pity swept my brain;
I felt some effort must be made
To give her liberty again.
"I'll free you if I can," I said.

A heavy tread at hand did sound,
It was her gaoler grim approaching;
"What has she done?" My tongue I found.
"The plaguey cat," he said, "'s been poaching!"

PHILIP HEMERY.

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CAP AND BELLS

TOPSYTURVY.

BINKS: "The ideas of courtesy between editor and contributor always struck me as peculiar."

DINKS: "How so?"

BINKS: "When the editor takes nothing, he thanks the contributor; and when he does take something, the contributor thanks him."

* * *

BIRD *VERSUS* BABY.

Little Bobby was inspecting the new baby for the first time, and his dictum was as follows:—

"I s'pose it's nice enough—what there is of it; but I'm sorry it ain't a parrot."

* * *

Taking the motion of the earth on its axis at seventeen miles a second, a modern philosopher says that if you take off your hat in the street to bow to a friend, you go seventeen miles bare-headed without catching cold.

* * * *

MEN OF LETTERS.

The actor has to have his Q,
The golfer needs a T;
The farmer carefully ten's his U,
The sailor goes to C.

The artist—well, by RT lives,
The huntsman needs his G,
And YR fences simply loathes—
They cut his G, UC.

The organ-grinder little makes,
Unless an AP owns;
And woman's heart with NV burns,
At sight of precious stones.

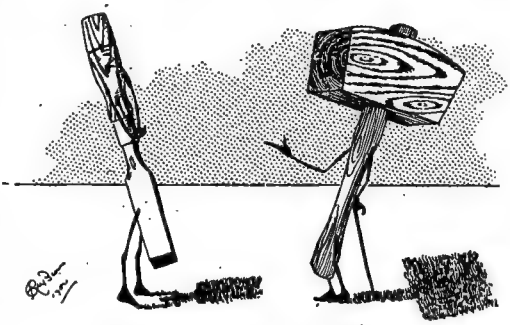
And then the bee-hive needs its B,
The birds include a J;
And high-class papers could not sell
Without a good SA.

The sportsman says "I'll W,"
When offered EC odds,
The skater IC surface needs
Ere to the pond he plods.

An AV every country needs,
And all need NRG,
In DD'll find who has not this
His purse will MTB.

A. S. M. Hutchinson.

* * *



ON THE OTHER HAND.

"The worst of the Rasp," said the Mallet loftily, "is that he is so coarse and rough."

"Yes," agreed the Chisel, "but, on the other hand, you must admit that he has innumerable fine points."

* * * * * * *

THE WAY THEY DO IN RUSSIA.

"Peteroff."

"Yes, lieutenant."

"The countersign for to-night is Alexandrovitchykopfostovskydragovitch. Let no man pass without it."

"Yes, lieutenant. But it is a bitter cold night."

"What of that?"

"The man who gives the password is likely to freeze to death before he finishes it."

"It is for the glory of the Czar, Peteroff."

"Yes, lieutenant."

* * * * *

POLICEMAN: "NOW, THEN, WHY DON'T YOU STOP WHEN I TELL YER? DIDN'T YOU SEE ME PUT UP MY 'AND?"
CABBY: "WELL, I DID NOTICE IT CAME OVER A BIT DARB LIKE."

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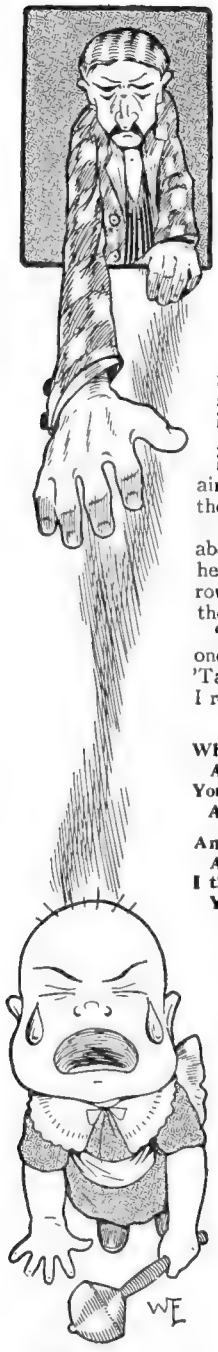


Distressed Mother (travelling with a crying baby): "Dear me! I don't know what to do with this child!"
Kind and thoughtful Bachelor (in the next seat): "Shall I open the window for you, madam?"

A BAD BREAK.

She had just accepted him, and they were blissfully discussing the "might-have-beens."

"Darling," he inquired, in the tone of one who knows what the answer will be, "darling, why didn't you accept that little donkey of a fop?"

"Because," she answered dreamily, "I loved another."

* * * *

GEOGRAPHY.

"Travelled?" said a brown-faced sailor in a train to a passenger who had questioned him. "I should think I 'ave. I've been all round the world; hover an' hunder it, too. There ain't many ports I don't know the inside of."

"Why, you must know a lot about geography," cried his hearer, and Jack, having furrowed his brow with momentary thought, said:

"Ho, yus; we did put in there once — only to coal, though. 'Taint much of a place, what I remember of it."

* * *

When you are coming o'er the lea,
And I'm going o'er it, too,
You see I see that you see me,
And I see you see I see you.

And as we near each other too,
And as we pass upon the lea,
I think you think I think of you—
You think I think you think of me.

* * *

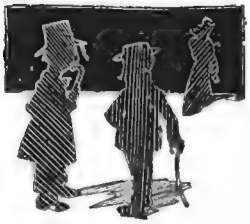
THE NATIONAL WEAPON.

An Irishman in France was challenged by a Frenchman to fight a duel, to which he readily consented, and suggested shillelahs.

"That won't do," said the second. "As the challenged party you have the right to choose the arms, but chivalry demands that you should decide upon a weapon with which Frenchmen are familiar."

"Is that so?" returned the Irishman. "Then, begorra, we'll foight wid guillotines."

* * *



"Did she weally call you a puppy?"
"Well — er — no, not exactly. She merely asked me if I liked dog-biscuit."

PA KNEW A THING OR TWO.

THE FATHER: "Ef I give you some money to spend while ye be in London, ye won't go to no music halls or gambling places, or drink champagne with it, will ye?"

SON: "No, pa."

THE FATHER: "Well, then, here's a shilling, an' mind ye keep yer word."

* * *

A DEVOTED COUPLE.

MRS. HARTT: "Yes, I have no doubt there are unhappy marriages; but, really, I cannot understand how they can be possible. Now, there's George and I. We are so devoted. He says he could not exist without me, and I am sure I live only for him."

MRS. GREEN: "You really are to be congratulated, both of you. By the way, how long have you been married?"

MRS. HARTT: "Just a week the day after to-morrow."

* * *

Man should linger at the windows
Where the dainty bonnets thrall,
Just to revel in the fact he
Doesn't have to buy them all.

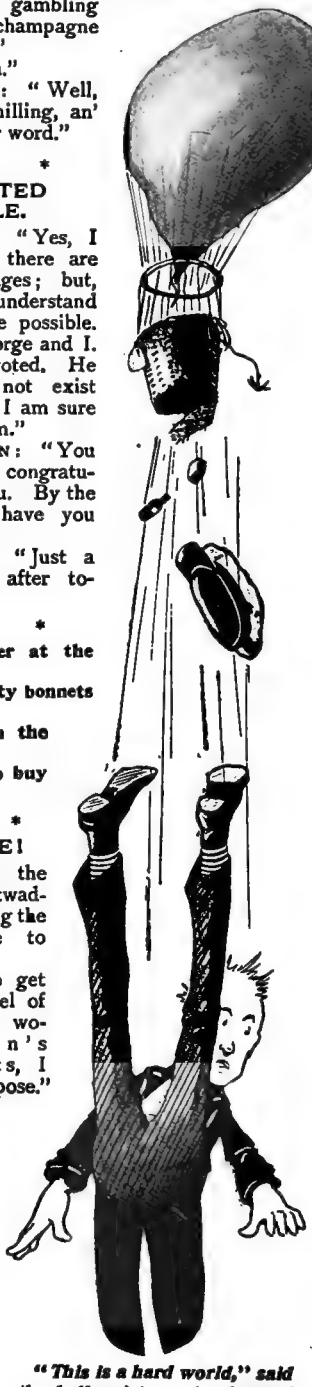
* * *

IMPOSSIBLE!

J.: "What's the cause of all this twaddle about elevating the stage, I'd like to know?"

F: "Want to get it above the level of the women's hats, I suppose."

* * *



"This is a hard world," said the balloonist, as he dropped out of the basket and landed in a stone quarry.

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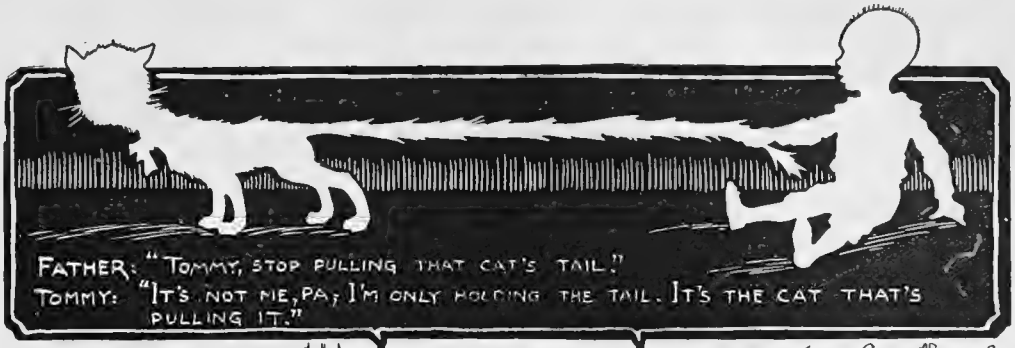
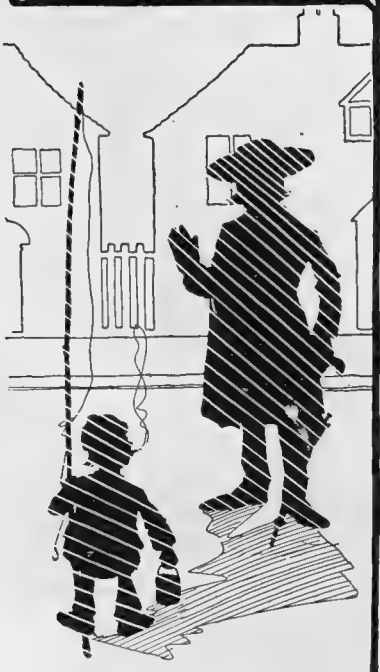
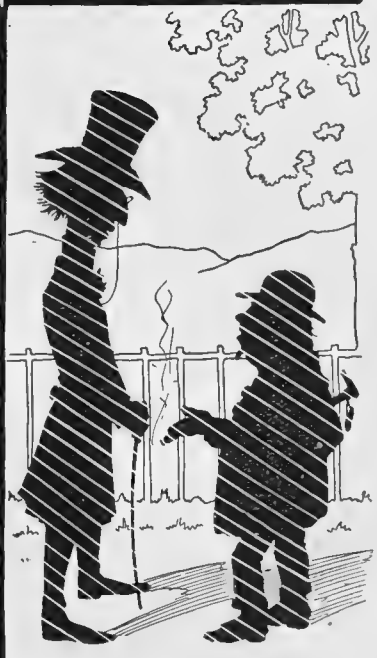


FATHER: "TOMMY, STOP PULLING THAT CAT'S TAIL!"
TOMMY: "IT'S NOT ME, PA; I'M ONLY HOLDING THE TAIL. IT'S THE CAT THAT'S PULLING IT."

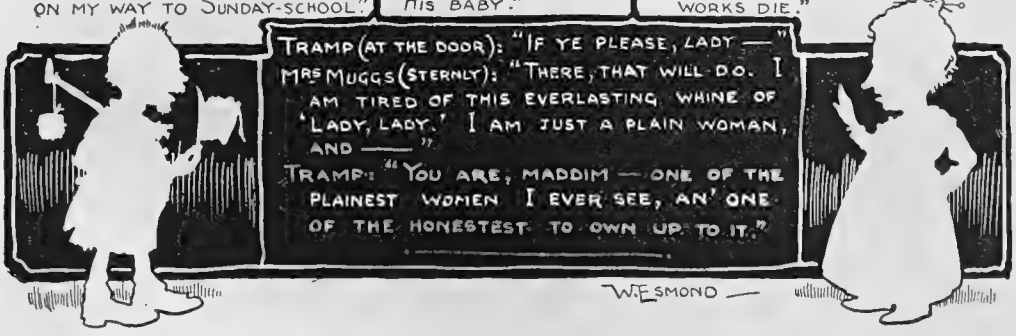


THE PARSON: "I HOPE YOU ARE NOT GOING FISHING ON SUNDAY, MY LITTLE MAN?"
THE KID: "OH, NO, SIR. I AM MERELY CARRYING THIS ROD SO THAT THOSE WICKED BOYS ACROSS THE STREET WON'T SUSPECT I'M ON MY WAY TO SUNDAY-SCHOOL."

"WHO WON THAT LONG-DISTANCE WALKING MATCH?"
"SPRIGGINS."
"HE DID! WHO WAS HIS TRAINER."
"HIS BABY."



A: IT'S EASY TO BE A GREAT NOVELIST NOWADAYS. THE LAST WORK IS ALWAYS THE BEST."
B: "YES. IT USED TO BE THAT AUTHORS DIED, AND THEIR WORKS LIVED: NOW THE AUTHORS LIVE AND THE WORKS DIE."



TRAMP (AT THE DOOR): "IF YE PLEASE, LADY —"
MRS MUGGS (STERNLY): "THERE, THAT WILL DO. I AM TIRED OF THIS EVERLASTING WHINE OF 'LADY, LADY.' I AM JUST A PLAIN WOMAN, AND ——"
TRAMP: "YOU ARE, MADDIM — ONE OF THE PLAINEST WOMEN I EVER SEE, AN' ONE OF THE HONESTEST TO OWN UP TO IT."

W. ESMOND —

Google

Act I.

The Sportsman, the Lady Artist, the Hat and the Wig: A Tragedy in Three Acts.

Act II.

Act III.

NOT TO BE BEATEN.

"Do you think you could eat another piece of cake, Tommy?"

"I think I could, auntie, if I stood up."

* * *

TRUE AS THE GOSPEL.

JOLKLEY: "That's nothing. I knew a young fellow who went to sleep one night, and the next morning awoke a white-haired paralytic."

POLKLEY: "Oh! Come now, I say!"

JOLKLEY: "Fact! The young fellow was boots in an hotel, and the white-haired paralytic was a guest."

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

GREAT IDEA!

AUTHOR: "You have no idea how many stamps I use posting my manuscripts to various editors."

CRITIC: "Very likely. I think there ought to be excursion tickets for manuscripts at reduced rates."

* * *

OH, WILLIAM!

MR. VAN NEERE (entertaining a few friends): "You didn't brush the cobwebs off this bottle, William."

WILLIAM: "Excuse me, sor, but I saw yez putting them on, an' I wouldn't tek the liberty unbid."

TRUE ELOQUENCE.

"Nupkins is an eloquent fellow. I heard him bring down the house last night."

"How was that?"

"He succeeded in persuading his landlord to reduce the rent."

* * * * *

SMARTNESS TO GET OUT OF SMARTING.

A schoolboy, being asked by his teacher how he should flog him, replied:

"If you please, sir, I should like to have it on the Italian system of penmanship, the upward strokes heavy and the downward ones light."

* * *

THE STOLEN DIAMONDS.

PROPS (rushing into the manager's office): "That wretched man, the super, has stolen the star's diamonds."

MANAGER: "I left them in your charge, and you will have to pay for them. I'll dock you seven-and-sixpence from this week's salary."

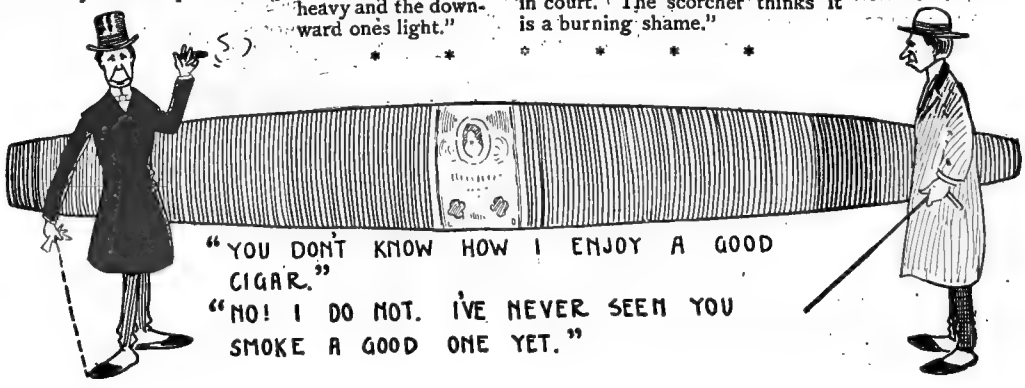
* * * * *

CAPITAL DEFINITION.

"Why do they call a fast bicycle rider a scorcher?"

"Because he goes a hot pace, makes pedestrians boiling mad, warms up the police, and gets roasted in court. The scorcher thinks it is a burning shame."

* * * *



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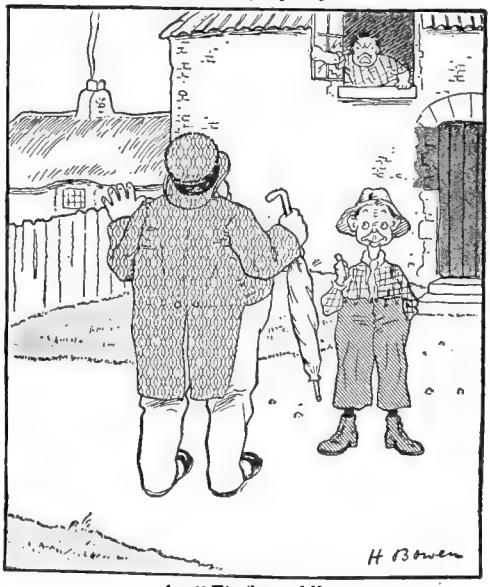
1.—"I can't make the man hear."

2.—"Will you let your father know that I want to see him, my boy?"

3.—"Right you are, sir."



4.—"That's pa!"

* * * * * * * * *

MAJOR'S METHOD OF ECONOMY.

First Attempt at Marketing Proves a Lamentable Failure.

A well-known officer has an idea that he can manage the affairs of the pantry better than his wife.

"My dear," he said, one day, "that baker of yours is cheating you. He ought to give you seven of these buns for sixpence. I can get seven for that price."

So the Major set off for the baker's shop.

On arriving, he pointed to a pile of buns on the counter, and said, in his severest way:

"I want seven of these buns for sixpence."

"But," said the girl in attendance.

"No 'buts' in the matter," retorted the Major. "If you don't give me seven I'll go elsewhere and get them."

"Well, sir, if you insist," said the girl, "I'll——".

"I do insist," said the Major.

So the girl counted seven buns into a paper bag and gave them to the Major, who went off home greatly elated with his success.

"Look what firmness can do," he said to his wife. "I got seven for sixpence."

"Yes," said his wife, "but you have been cheated. These buns are halfpenny buns."

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Don't Miss this Page simply because it's the Last in the Number.

THE WORLD THROUGH OTHER EYES.

It will certainly come as a surprise to most people who read "The Matador's Point of View" on page 267 to learn that a Spanish matador is no mere butcher, but a respected and respectable member of society—a man ardently admired, not only by the masses, but by the classes as well. As Bombita Chico himself says, his position in society is very similar to that of a successful tenor in other countries. This is hard to realise, when we remember the horror and indignation of our public opinion and Press when, a few years ago, somebody suggested introducing bull-fights into this country.

MRS. GERTIE DE S. WENTWORTH-JAMES.

Mrs. Wentworth-James begins, on page 219, a series of stories, "The Confessions of Cupid." Stories have appeared in THE ROYAL by this lady from time to time under her maiden name, Gertie de S. Webster. A few months ago she married—but I had best let her give an account of herself in her own words:—

"I was originally brought up for music (piano), and as a child was considered by way of being a prodigy of sorts (got *senior* certificate when I was nine, played piano concertos with Sir August Mann's band at Crystal Palace when eleven, and other big concerts, etc.), but I never cared for music. . . . I have never been out of England, except twice to Ostend (to test a roulette system by which I paid my own, my mother's, and friend's hotel, travelling, and all expenses), and, as far as I feel now, shall never go again until there is a submarine district railway or system of aërial tram cars. . . . I love London intensely, and find wonder in every bit of it, but I have spent some very happy years of my life in beautiful Matlock, in Derbyshire.

"I am fond of waltzing, billiards, and most exercise except walking, which I detest. . . . Cats (and all dear animals) I love more than I can say, or more than you would be inclined to print, anyway; and any good luck I may have had lately I attribute to my black pussy (Weenie), who has just had a black son (Claude). I am now waiting for Claude to bring me more good luck, . . . I have never had any literary introductions, except one or two from an individual to whom I returned evil for good, by marrying. . . . I love writing and I love hard work; work, either taken seriously or as a hobby, is most exhilarating.

"I am disgracefully superstitious, and frequently throw pennies at a new moon so as to appease it during the coming month, and prevent the Editor of THE ROYAL from rejecting more than the usual quantity of manuscripts.

"My age is——but there, I know I have already exceeded my space."

Photo *Lees & Co.*

Mrs. Wentworth-James, the Author of "The Confessions of Cupid," on page 219.

SONGS AND MUSIC AT SIXPENCE A TIME.

It was expected that **Pearson's Sixpenny Music** would be more or less successful, but that it would be something like a boom we never dreamed. "Homeward," the first song, went very well, "Echoes," the second, went better still, and "Venetia," the third, is simply going like wildfire. Of course, the unique offer of £100 for a song, particulars of which are to be found on the back cover, has something to do with this success.

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The Best Cocoa for BREAKFAST LUNCH & SUPPER is

Van Houten's Cocoa

A COCOA you can enjoy.

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PRICE **30/-**

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For Breakfast & after Dinner.

In making, use less quantity, it being so much stronger than ordinary COFFEE.

Any Talking-Machine Record

will be sent by return and carriage paid on receipt of price. Our premises being situated in the centre of the talking-machine business world, we are in the happy position to obtain any Record ordered by our customers. We have received numerous letters from customers who answered our previous advertisements expressing surprise and gratitude at the prompt way we have attended to their orders. We stock all kinds of Records, and shall be glad to send you the latest lists of same on receipt of name and address and stating what you want (disc or cylinder). The prices of Disc Records are as follows: Gramophone, from 2s. 6d. to 21s.; Columbia, 1s. 6d. to 3s.; Odeon, two selections on each, 2s. 6d. and 5s.; Nicole, 1s. and 2s. 6d. Of Cylinder Records we stock Edison from 1s. 6d., Edison-Bell from 1s., Pathé from 1s. 4d., and Columbia from 1s. You can order what you want, it will be sent you by **Return of Post** and **Carriage Paid.** We stock all the Gramophone & Typewriter Co.'s machines and supply same or any phonograph for cash or easy terms. Allowances made for old machines when purchasing new Gramophone goods. If you have been disappointed in your local dealer, write to the "Record" firm, and remember we pay carriage on all goods.

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An Interesting Article on an Entertaining Subject,

THE HISTORY OF MUSIC.

To all lovers of Music—and who are not—the early history of this delightful subject is full of interest. From the Egyptians (at least 4000 years before Christ) the Hebrews learnt all they knew of the art, and were indebted to them for a perfect scale of Music. For several centuries during the persecution of the early Christians there was no progress in the art, but about 320 A.D. a school for Choristers was established in Rome. At this period the Greeks developed the art of Music, and to this movement may be traced the early history of Gregorian Music. Then came in the year 450 the introduction of organs into Spain. Vocal Music, as practised by the Troubadours of the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, was an important factor in the continuation of the art. Following the Troubadours came the Meister Singers, and singers of Old Folk Lore Songs in England, and from this date Music and Singing really began to occupy an important position in the homes of the people.

CLASSICAL MUSIC.

Good Music is an appeal to the emotions and intellect, and not as one too readily imagines a mere ear-tickling sensation. The great composers of Oratorio, Operatic, and Instrumental Music compel attention to their works by sheer force of the feeling expressed, and their tone pictures appeal to the better nature of the listener. The lover of Good Music is inclined to pin his faith to the more modern composers, such as, Wagner, Tschaikowsky, and Greig, but the genuine admirer of the best in Music is broad-minded enough to discriminate amongst the wealth of really great works, and his selection may run from the most abstruse work of Musical Art to the modern English Ballad. The average concert goer still retains his appreciation of the sweet, simple, and homely airs as rendered by such eminent vocalists as Mr. Ben Davies and Madame Kirkby Lunn.

MUSIC FOR THE MASSES.

Light Music of the Comic Opera School, which is mainly an English product, has gained a remarkable hold on the affections of the British Public, and there are few entertainments at which this side of Musical Art is not largely represented. This can be accounted for by the fact that the lighter or comic side appeals to a large class, as it does not need so much concentration of thought, and to the hard-worked citizen this is an important factor. Evidence of the growth of the Popular Song is shown everywhere, and the ear-haunting melodies of the theatre, music-hall, and pantomime seize ready hold on the listener, and are hummed and whistled everywhere. Those who have heard the characteristic little songs of an Ada Reeve or Vesta Tilley cannot fail to appreciate the happy lilt or swing which is such a feature of their style.

POPULAR INSTRUMENTS.

The remarkable development of the once popular Musical Box has brought about the now much more favourite "Perfecta" Sound Reproducing Instrument. This is the invention of Messrs. Pathé Frères, of Lamb's Conduit Street, London, and in the best sense of the word is a real Music producer. Messrs. Pathé's have experimented for years, and with the aid of their latest scientific appliances have introduced a machine so perfect that one is amazed and delighted at its possibilities, and, whereas before the hard, blatant, brassy sounds were constantly present, there is an entire absence of these disadvantages in their latest production, the "Perfecta." Not only have Messrs. Pathé developed this side of the Art of Reproduction, but their Records, which have the personal approval of the greatest artistes of the day, are remarkable for their purity and breadth of tone, and are justly claimed to be the "World's Sweetest Records." All the best in Classical and Popular Music—Vocal and Instrumental—may be found in Messrs. Pathé's List.

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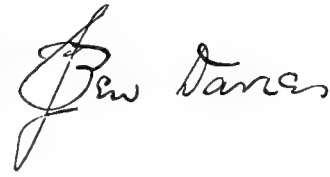
A Page of Autographs.

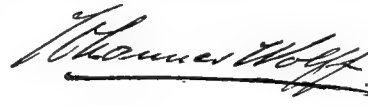
"I had thought it impossible that a phonograph could have so effectively 'held the mirror up to nature.' Please accept my cordial congratulations on the marvellous records you have made of my voice."

"I am so enchanted with your phonographs and records that I must confess the results you have attained are marvellous. The very great success you have obtained in the United Kingdom is a token of the appreciation of the public, and I am very happy to congratulate you."



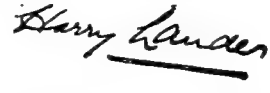
"I am greatly pleased with the records taken from my voice, and the perfect manner your splendid machine reproduces them. They are quite the best I have ever heard, and I particularly notice their sweetness of tone and the entire absence of the metallic so often found in the reproduction of phono-records."

"I have much pleasure in sending you my best compliments for the wonderful records you manufacture. I must express my astonishment at the marvellous results you have obtained with the Pathé machines and records."

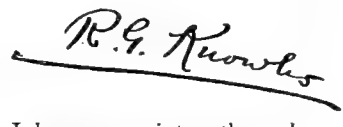


"I sincerely think the Pathé records *excellent*, both those I heard while fulfilling my engagement with you, and my own personal ones, which I was delighted with."

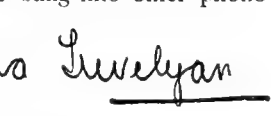
"Your phonograph is the most wonderful and most accurate I have ever heard, and must take a high place in the amusement of thousands who, I am sure, will be equally amazed at so human an instrument."



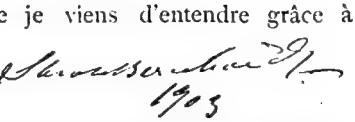
"After having searched the dictionary I have found the word I want to express my opinion of your records—"perfection.'"



"I consider your phonographs and records marvellous. I have sung into other phonographs, but I have never heard my own voice until I sang into the Pathé ones. The richness of tone and the slightest expression of the voice are faithfully reproduced."



"Je n'hésite pas une seconde à affirmer que ce que je viens d'entendre grâce à l'enregistrement de votre phonographe est admirable et au delà de toutes mes espérances. C'est ce que j'ai entendu de plus pur et de plus complet, je l'affirme."



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The above Testimonials speak for themselves. The "Perfecta" Sound Reproducing Instrument re-echoes the sentiment.

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SONGS & SINGERS.

On the preceding page Messrs. Pathé Frères have introduced the reader to the high opinions held by the greatest artistes of the age on the merits of the "Perfecta" Sound Reproducing Instrument and the "World's Sweetest Records." The following list is a brief extract from their complete catalogue (numbering thousands of records), and is for the guidance of those readers who may wish to order records before consulting the catalogue which is sent post free on request.

List of Records.

Mr. Ben Davies.

60019 The Star of Bethlehem.
60020 The Sailor's Grave—*Sullivan.*
60021 The Flower Song (Carmen.—*Bizet.*
60022 Hark hark, the Lark.
60023 Sigh no more, Ladies.
60024 Tell me, Charming Creature (Old English Melody).
60025 The Holy City—*Stephen Adams.*
60026 Killarney—*M. W. Balfe.*

Mme. Kirkby Lunn.

50000 One Spring Morning—*Nevin.*
50001 When the Stars were young—*P. A. Rubens.*
50002 When all was young—*Gounod.*
50003 O peaceful England (Merrie England)—*Edw. German.*
50004 Summer Night—*Goring Thomas.*
50005 The Heart of a Rose—*Landon Ronald.*
50006 Come, Lasses and Lads (Old English).

Miss J. Maclachlan.

50080 The Scottish Bluebells.
50081 The Hundred Pipers.
50082 Blue Bonnets.
50083 Auld Robin Gray.
50084 Will ye no come back again?
50085 Mo Dhachaidh.
50086 Ho Ro Mo Nighean Donn Bhoidheach.
50087 Land o' the Leal.

Mr. C. Melfort D'Alton.

60799 The Minstrel Boy.
60800 Let Erin remember the days of old.
60801 Love thee, dearest.
60802 The Meeting of the Waters.
60803 Kathleen O'More.
60804 Sweet Innisfallen.
60805 The Irish Emigrant.
60806 All Souls' Day.

Mr. Andrew Black.

60051 There is a green hill far away.
60052 Nazareth.
60055 La Danza.
60056 On, away, awake.
60057 Thou'rt passing hence.

Mr. Harry Lauder.

60452 The Lass O'Killicrankie.
60453 A Trip to Tobermory.
60454 Calligan Callagain.
60455 The Referee.
60456 I. C. C.
60457 Mrs. Jean MacFarlane.
60458 Rising early in the Morning.
60459 Hey Donald.
60460 Jericho.
60461 He took me up to take me down.

Mr. R. G. Knowles.

60490 Time is Money.
60491 Girly Girly.
60492 Silenced reigned supreme.
60493 Philosophy.
60494 Love, Marriage, and Divorce.
60495 Beautiful Dreamy Eyes (1st verse).
60496 Beautiful Dreamy Eyes (2nd verse).

M. Johannes Wolff.

70100 Polonaise Song—*Wieniawski.*
70101 Serenade—*Saint-Saens*
70102 Extase—*Thomé.*
70103 Serenade—*Pierné.*
70104 Ave Maria—*Gounod.*

Signor E Caruso.

84003 Romance: Tu non mi vuoi piu bene.
84004 Tosca—E lucevan le Stelle.
84006 Ugonotti—Bel cielo della Turena.

Miss Vesta Tilley.

50210 Following Father's Footsteps.
50211 The wise old Owl.
50212 Algy.

Duets by Madame Kirkby Lunn and Mr. Ben Davies.

76500 The Sailor sighs as sinks his Native Shore—*M. W. Balfe.*
76501 Children Pray this Love to Cherish—*Louis Spohr.*
76502 Home to our Mountains (Il Trovatore, 4th Act).
76503 Maying.

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Sign this:

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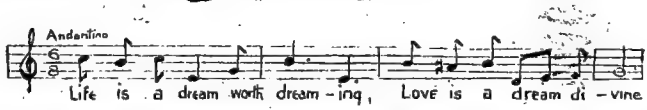
This is **The Third Piece**

Venetia

WORDS BY
Edward Teschemacher.

MUSIC BY L. DENZA.



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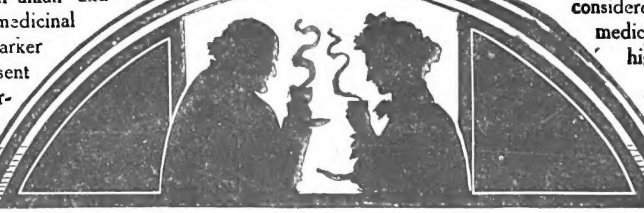

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